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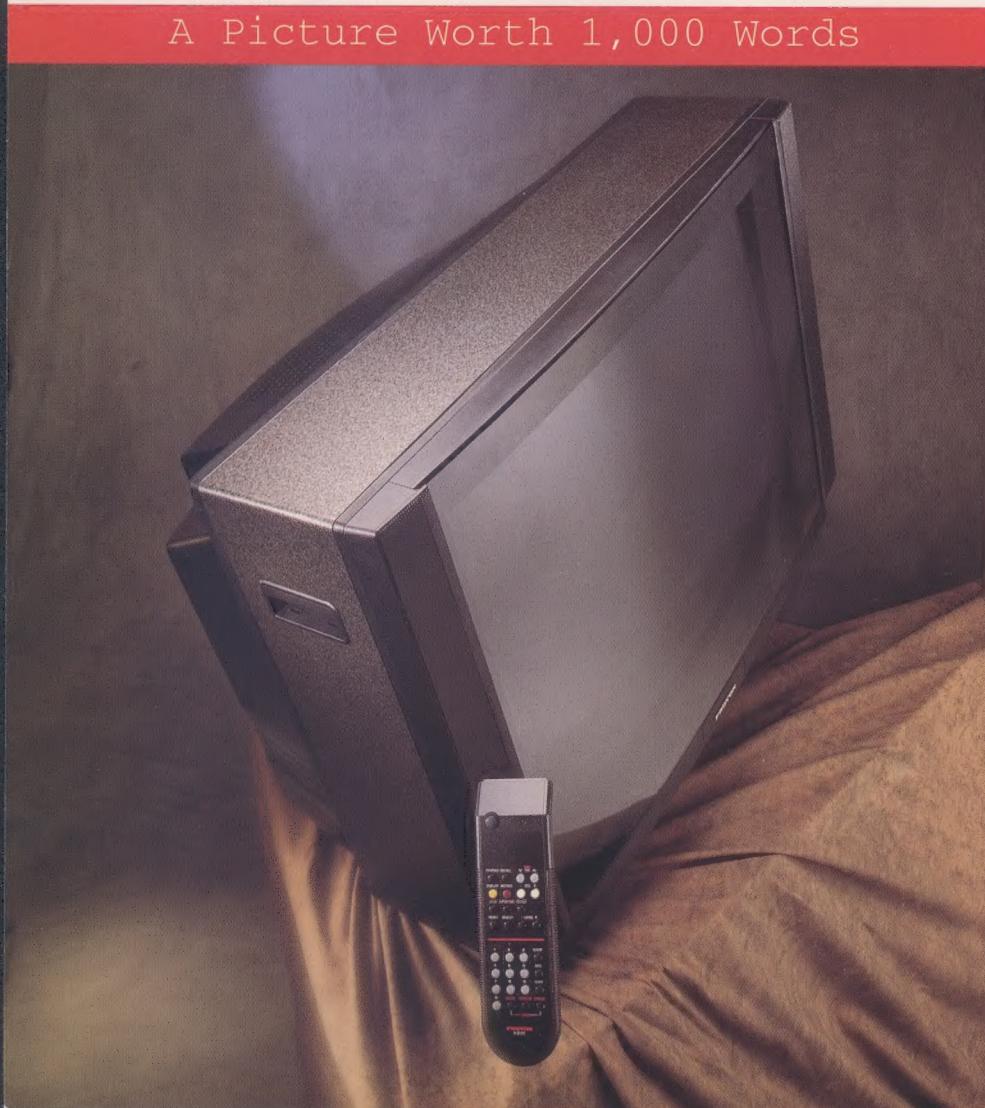
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P R O T O N

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VIDEO

magazine



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Cover:
Desktop vs. traditional editing—which type is for you? Pictured are a work screen from *Adobe Premiere 3.0*, Sony's CCD-FX620 8mm camcorder and Videonics' Thumbs Up editing controller. Photograph by Les Morsillo.

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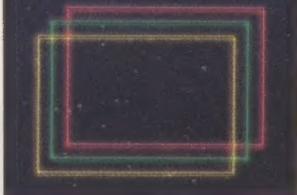
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CHANNEL ONE



Desktop decisions

Desktop video, one of the hot buzz phrases of the '90s (along with multimedia and HDTV), is capturing the attention of increasing numbers of home video enthusiasts as the once separate worlds of personal computers and home video equipment continue their inexorable meld. It's a natural progression of course, to use computers in the video editing process, especially as home video goes digital and becomes increasingly a function of the ones and zeros of the computer world.

But one intrinsic difference between computers and home video will continue to abide even as the two transform themselves into a new generation of digital video components. Computers are all about utility, accomplishing given tasks better and more efficiently, whether it's number crunching, word processing or editing your home videos.

Home video is about entertainment, whether your pleasure is a home theater set up to bring the cinema experience into your living room, interactive games that put you in the middle of increasingly realistic action, or the best camcorders and editing equipment to capture your memories and replay them to maximum effect.

So if you're into video editing at home, computers will definitely be part of the equation in the years to come. But do you need one now? Perhaps. Contributing Editor Timothy Liebe spells out some of the factors you'll want to consider if you're thinking of taking up computer-based video editing. See "Desktop Dilemma" on page 38.

If it's a compact VHS camcorder you'd like to use to generate the source material for that computer editing system, Contributing Editor Jonathan Takiff delivers a buying guide to help the selection process with "Compact Comeback" on page 42.

Another impact of the digital age is the proliferation of online computer services for information, interaction and just plain gab. And there are plenty of video-related services among them if you know where to look. Contributing Editor Stewart Wolpin provides the low-down in "Video Online" on page 50.

Finally, firmly rooted in the here and now, is "Audio You Can Feel" (page 46), contributor Corey Greenberg's rundown on the powerhouse subwoofers that put the rumble, the roar and much more into your home theater.

Jim Barry

James M. Barry
Editor

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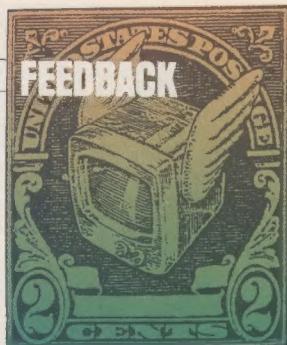
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138/594



TV features, ED Beta and new technology

Gimme a good picture

I couldn't agree more with reader Eric Anderson ("Feedback," Nov '93). There is a market for TV monitors without useless or redundant features. In fact, your feature in the same issue ("27-Inch Superbowl") reinforces this point. The finest of the TVs you evaluated for resolution, contrast, etc. contained "extensive feature packages" that I believe could be eliminated. The result would be high-quality monitors at reasonable prices for people, like Mr. Anderson and myself, who own systems that already include decoders, multi-channel amps and top speakers.

Gaylen Halbert
Weimar, California

know I'm alone in the world, but after years of therapy I just don't care anymore. Hail ED Beta! Steven Staples
Miami Beach, Florida

Terms of endearment

As the owner of a small video production facility which caters to the consumer, I have seen firsthand the public's reaction to the proliferation of new video technology. Many of my customers bring me 8mm and VHS-C tapes to copy to VHS because they don't want to learn how to connect their equipment. The general population is content with VHS. I believe the public will not fully embrace any new recording technology



Hail ED Beta!

I've been shooting weddings and events since 1986. In 1988 I invested in the newly hailed miracle of Hi8. As my business expanded I purchased a second EVO-9100 Hi8 camcorder, then Sony's EVS-900 and CCD-V5000 camcorders. My happiness started to fade as I was relentlessly confronted with flakey tapes that fell apart. I went through every type of Hi8 tape to no avail. In 1990 I took a major step. After comparing the then new Panasonic AG-460 S-VHS camcorder and the Sony EDC-55 ED Beta camcorder, I plunged head-long into a format I had been warned was being discontinued. I have never regretted it.

Since my acquiring two EDC-55s the praise for my work has been non-stop. I owe this largely to the tremendous quality ED Beta delivers. The tape is as strong as steel. Never in three years have I encountered a noticeable dropout. I use my camera masters over and over, something unthinkable with Hi8. I

until it meets all of the following criteria. It must be smaller, provide a noticeably better picture and be easier to use than VHS. It must also be recordable using inexpensive and widely available cartridges at least two hours long.

Rick Bennette
Ridgefield, Connecticut

For The Record

A headline in January's "Videotests" should have identified the PS27152 TV as a ProScan, not RCA, brand. Other references in the test were correct. ■

Video Magazine welcomes your comments. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. Letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address correspondence to Feedback, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

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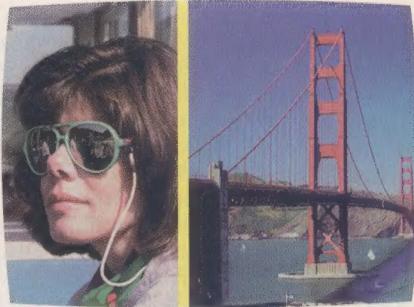
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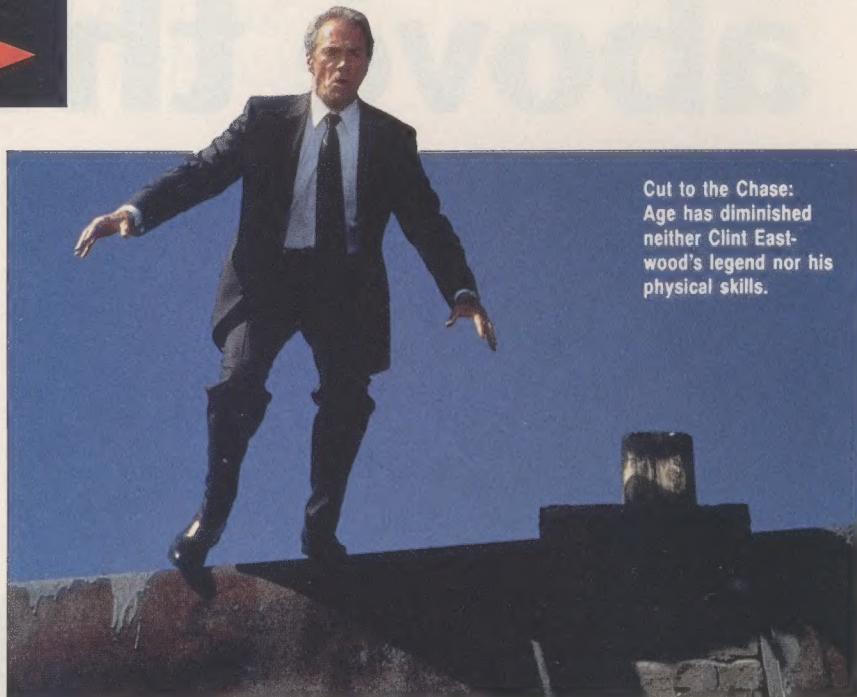
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Tougher than the rest

► A great actor loses his personality in every character he plays, but a great movie star infuses every character he plays with his well-known personality. Clint Eastwood is definitely in the latter category. He is first and foremost, "an icon," in the words of Eastwood's *In the Line of Fire* (Columbia TriStar) co-star John Malkovich. That's why nobody involved in the production of this first-rate thriller was surprised when onlookers at one of its Washington, D.C. location sets let out spontaneous shouts of "Clint for president."

"At first I thought they were saying 'Clinton for president,'" says Wolfgang Petersen, director of *In the Line of Fire*. "It was a few weeks before the election. But then I realized it was Clint they wanted. I think a lot of people would like to see Clint in that job," muses the German-born director.

Talking to Eastwood, you get the feeling that his familiar no-nonsense, tough-guy persona comes from real life. In fact, the sixty-something actor admits



Cut to the Chase:
Age has diminished
neither Clint East-
wood's legend nor his
physical skills.

he had a rough time with one scene in the film, wherein his character—an aging secret service agent—jogs alongside the president's motorcade. "I had to work hard on my performance to make sure the audience believed I was really winded," Eastwood says.

—Jon Silberg

SEGA'S SIN CITY SALVO

► Every conventioneer has a favorite place to play in Las Vegas. At mine, they don't give you free drinks, but you're guaranteed not to lose, and the kids can play too: It's the Sega arcade at the new Luxor hotel.

The arcade is packed with the very latest in videogames, including new ones that incorporate elements of virtual reality. For tender tummies, there's the AS-1, a relatively tame simulator module that seats several people. My favorite is the R360, a fighter-plane simulator that straps you into a semi-enclosed cockpit with an integral video monitor. It's an aeronautical shoot-'em-up, but as your plane moves, so do you—flick the stick sideways to roll, and the R360 cockpit rolls right along; pull back for a climb and you're suddenly supine. (Don't binge at the buffet before you play this one.)

There's also Virtua Formula racing, which comprises eight race car simulators, each facing a rear-projection monitor. Each competitor sits in one car. As you race against seven other players on the virtual course, you can feel every bump, skid and crash—the cars actually move around slightly as you accelerate, steer and collide.

The games are expensive, but for Vegas, the Sega arcade is a bargain—my pal Marvin definitely looked happier after spending four bucks on a few minutes of Virtua Racing than he did after spending \$100 for five minutes at the craps table.

—Brent Butterworth

How do you dupe?

► Of course you have never copied a rental tape. That would be wrong.

Sadly, however, millions of VCR owners have done so. Thwarting these miscreants is the job of the Macrovision Corp., which is happy to report that home copies are on the run, thanks to the Macrovision copying signal. The special pulse, encoded on about half of all movies on the video market, confounds the copying VCR and produces unstable and totally unwatchable dups.

Master Blaster:
Sega's R360 arcade
game recreates the
dips and turns of an
aerial battle.



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Which came first,
the violence in society
or the violence de-
picted in films that
society patronizes?"

—ROBERT SHAYE,
Chairman of New Line Cinema, in
response to lawmakers who said
Hollywood should curb
movie mayhem.

Macrovision appears to be having the desired effect among casual copiers. (It's no obstacle for professional pirates.) According to an independent survey commissioned by Macrovision, the average VCR household has 3.7 illegal copies. That's down from 5.6 copies in 1991, when Macrovision sponsored a similar survey.

Other signs of frustrated copying: The percentage of homes with any illegal copies has dropped from 41 to 31 percent, copies made by admitted copiers have decreased from 32 million to 25 million, and failed attempts at illegal copying have reportedly increased from 14 million to 22 million. Macrovision believes its process has saved video stores more than \$100 million in sales and rentals that would otherwise have been lost.

—Andy Wickstrom

Court TV? How about Court Cassettes?

► Can you guess which trial will be the first to be released on the new Trial Story Series from Time-Life Video and Court TV?

That's right, the very first release is *Accused of Rape: The Trial of William Kennedy Smith*. Released at the same time is *Til Death Do Us Part*, an account of the trial of Pamela Smart, the New Hampshire high-school guidance counselor convicted of conspiring with her teenage student/lover to murder her husband.

The one-hour tapes are priced at \$19.99 and sold through mail order. Coming soon—of course—is California versus the Menendez brothers.

VHS CONVERTS

► In the first case of reverse video programming we've come across, a Texas company is converting original CD-ROM titles into a series of VHS videotapes. Texas Caviar, an Austin-based creator of computer software has issued a trio of children's tapes based on its interactive discs.

Why do it? "We never really have gone in for convention," says sales director Richard Smith, who hopes the tapes will lead more people to the discs. Texas Caviar got the idea from a client seeking help in translating his VHS program into a CD-ROM.

The discs—*Whale of a Tale*, *Annabel's Dream of Ancient Egypt* and *Annabel's Dream of Medieval England*—are aimed at early readers. Priced from \$85 to \$90 in Windows, Macintosh and MPC versions, they're packed with vocabulary games and interactive lessons. The VHS versions, at \$19.95 each, preserve the stories, but run them twice—first conventionally, then with subtitles that highlight key words as they're spoken. The tapes retain the discs' stereo soundtracks, but leave out the interactive elements, which are rewritten as activity guides for parents and teachers in accompanying brochures. If the tapes do well, Texas Caviar intends to keep on converting.

—Stan Pinkwas



Seoul train, karaoke style

► Fans of karaoke, the sing-along entertainment medium Asians can't resist, can look forward to a high-capacity twist from Samsung. The giant Korean

manufacturer has a new format it calls CD-OK that can squeeze up to 1,500 songs and a few minutes of video onto a single compact disc.

Costing about \$1,000, the first CD-OK players have just landed in Korean stores, accompanied by 15 CD-OK discs, each bearing at least 1,000 tunes. The players should migrate to the U.S. about mid-year, complete with mic-mixing and echo features, but with less aggressive discographies. Expect to see CD-OK discs with 50 songs each for about \$50. The 1,000-song discs will be mainly for bars.

—SP

THE NUMBER

The percentage of leading business executives who feel overwhelmed by the explosive growth in multimedia and information technologies, according to a poll by Yankelovich Partners.

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Late Breaking News

SEEKING TO make home theater less intimidating for the average Joe, Dolby has produced a VHS tape that provides an easy introduction to the subject. The *Consumer Guide to Home Theatre* provides a tutorial in the basics of surround sound, tips on selecting a system, and a how-to section that deals with issues like hook-up and speaker placement. The tape even has test tones for use in calibrating your system. Dolby plans to distribute the \$19.95 tape through electronics dealers and video stores. It's also available by phone. Call 800-241-4115.

AT PRESS TIME, WARNER HOME Video was reportedly set to announce the March 22 release of *The Fugitive*, 1992's second most successful movie (after that one about the dinosaurs). *The Fugitive* should be priced to sell at under \$25, and you can expect far deeper discounts as mass-market retailers battle it out with video stores for precious sales. No official word yet on MCA/Universal's *Jurassic Park*, though a summer release appears likely. Rumors suggest a list price similar to that of *The Fugitive*, with special editions available on both tape and laserdisc.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA U.S. District Court Judge Robert Kelleher is mad as hell at video retailers who sell pirated tapes, and he's not going to take it anymore. The judge ordered two L.A.-area video-store owners to sell their businesses to someone more reputable, or be closed down for good. Meanwhile, New York City police are cracking down on brazen street vendors who sell unauthorized cassettes of hit movies just as they are being released theatrically. The N.Y.P.D. Organized Crime Task Force raided a Brooklyn Facility at the end of '93 and found 74 VCRs strung together, along with master tapes for such recent theatrical releases as *Mrs. Doubtfire* and *Addams Family Values*.

ANOTHER INDICATOR OF THE coming merger of video and computers: IBM and Apple have joined the Digital VCR Conference, a group of manufacturers now developing a digital deck standard for HDTV and NTSC.

AT CES, PANASONIC DISPLAYED its radical Flat Vision television set which has a sharp, bright 13-inch screen that's only four inches thick. But U.S. viewers won't have a shot at it until next year at least. The set costs about \$2,700 in Japan, where it's just been introduced, and a source at Panasonic says it's unlikely to be released here until the company can figure out how to get the price below \$1,500.

ANYONE WHO STILL DOUBTS CD-ROMs are here to stay had only to check out the growing ranks of R- and X-rated discs at CES. New Machine Publishing from California boasts 20 titles for PC and Mac formats, while Penthouse magazine previewed *Virtual Photo Shoot*, an "interactive" disc through which viewers can create electronic slide shows from QuickTime files of Penthouse pets posing and disrobing. Unfortunately, publisher Bob Guccione appears onscreen to critique your every effort.

TALK ABOUT SYNERGY! Beginning in May, Sony will be including a cassette of *Ren & Stimpy* episodes with every three-pack of its V line of blank VHS videotapes.

SONY'S POPULAR CCD-TR101 8mm camcorder is soon to be updated, according to a Sony insider encountered at CES. The new version, to be announced later this year, will add a color viewfinder and RC time code to the TR101's features, which already include an optical image stabilizer.

SIGN OF THE TIMES: SEEN scouring the aisles at the video games exhibits at WCES, talent agents from ICM of Hollywood, looking to make movie/game deals and sign up game designers.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN Jack Valenti's appearances at CES were rated R. That was when the president of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) came to CES to rail against the threat video-cassette recorders posed to Hollywood. This January, with Tinseltown studios enjoying record sales and rentals of home videos, Valenti was in PG mode in Las Vegas, conferring with representatives of the video game industry about content ratings.

Circle 3 on Reader Service Card.

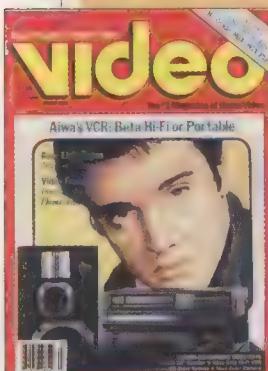
TIMESHIFT

TEN YEARS AGO IN
VIDEO MAGAZINE

"The long and arduous battle against the motion picture industry over your right to tape came to an end on January 17 when the U.S Supreme Court ruled in favor of Sony in the 'Betamax Case.' The 5-4 decision was welcome news for nine million VCR owners who now have some official legal blessing to tape programming in the privacy of their own homes. But it was only a small victory. We applaud the decision, but wonder whether Congress will now scurry to collect royalties on blank tape or hardware, a move which will surely drive up the costs of video... Ted Turner, cable's colorful spokesman, usually doesn't worry about anything. But he has warned his cable compatriots to beware of satellite dishes. Turner's highly respected but money-losing Cable News Network (CNN) is now in the red for some \$100 million. He has mentioned that his friendly bankers are beginning to perspire... CBS/Fox has announced a major price drop, to

\$19.98 suggested retail, for its CED videodiscs. The question remains: Will this stimulate disc player sales or are we really talking about cleaning one's inventories and cutting one's losses?... All eyes are turn-

ing upward to the first operational direct broadcast satellite (DBS) service, offered by United Satellite Communications Incorporated (USCI). Available to subscribers from the midwest, USCI offers about 1/3 the channels of a typical ground-based cable system for three times the monthly cost."



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COLLECTOR'S CLEARINGHOUSE

In the Shadow of Twin Peaks and Krakatoa

Several years ago, I saw a Christmas special done in puppet animation, "starring" a cat named Rugby and a mouse named "Cat Toy." I think it was called *The Christmas Toy*, and I would be ecstatic if someone has a copy. I will, of course, pay for copying, shipping and insurance—and you will be my friend forever.

Scott Redstone
720 Greenwich Street, Apt. 2U
New York, NY 10014

I'm trying to locate *Krakatoa, East of Java*, a 1969 film a.k.a. *Volcano* directed by Bernard Kowalski.

I'm also looking for these television programs: *Applause* (1971) with Lauren Bacall, *6 Rms Riv Vu* with Alan Alda and Carol Burnett, and the miniseries *Nicholas Nickleby* with Roger Rees. Please write:

John Richards
1318 West Cermak Road
Chicago, IL 60608

I'm looking for VHS recordings of the miniseries *Game, Set and Match* as shown on A&E or PBS a few years ago. It was based on novels by Len Deighton and made in England. I'm also looking for the syndicated TV series *Dempsey & Makepeace*, which ran for two years in the mid-'80s. Will pay for tapes and reasonable expenses for good-quality copies.

D.J. Vogt
2798 Shetland Court
Dubuque, IA 52001

I'm searching for episodes from the five years of Vic Morrow's classic series *Combat*. I am also looking for the entire series run of *Hogan's Heroes*. I will pay costs involved.

Michael Winkler
HHC 1-6 INF Box 104
Unit 28020
APO AE 09112-5000

I am desperately seeking Harold Lloyd silent films. They're out there somewhere. I'll be glad to reimburse anyone who has them for whatever they might have.

Robert Farlich
5400 Canterbury
Shawnee-Mission, KS 66205

I'm interested in movies about the Scottish Hebrides, particularly the Isle of Barra, where my mother was born. Tight

Little Island (a.k.a. *Whiskey Galore*), *Rockets Galore*, *The Bridal Path*, *The Maggie* would all be welcome. I will reimburse all costs.

Donald Matheson
31-27 170th Street
Flushing, NY 11358

I am looking for episodes of the Saturday morning series entitled *Red Hand Gang*, and an NBC special *Papa & Me*. Both starred Matthew Labyorteaux. Costs reimbursed.

Don Centilli
1720 Richmond
Grand Rapids, MI 49504



All Hung Up: The Little Rascals go one step beyond in one of their many *Our Gang* comedies.

I'm looking for *Our Gang* episodes with the Little Rascals. I'm also looking for TV shows with any reggae, dancehall or soca artists. I have some to trade, but will pay all expenses for either of these items. Any format's okay—VHS, Beta or 8mm.

Reed Fitzpatrick
12 Erie Avenue
Rockaway, NJ 07866

Twin Peaks fanatic must have Bravo Channel's presentation of *Twin Peaks* with intros. Will handsomely reimburse all costs. Call collect (615-292-3879) or write.

Stephen E. Terrell
4101 Murphy Road
Nashville, TN 37209

I am trying to find a VHS copy in SP speed of an early '60s film titled *Shadow on the Land*. It stars John Forsythe. The plot is about life in America under Nazi rule. If anyone has a good, clear, uncut copy, please write. I will reimburse all costs.

Douglas Owen
Box 8551

Rowland Heights, CA 91748

I am an avid fan of the Kansas City Chiefs, the team of America's heartland. I would like copies of the two Super Bowl games in which they played: Super Bowl I, Jan. 15, 1967; and Super Bowl IV, Jan. 11, 1970. I want the complete games, not the highlight films. The games were played before videotape recorders were available. I hope someone might have converted the game films to Super-8 film, or VHS or Beta tape. I will reimburse expenses and be forever grateful.

Robert F. Smith
9351 East 60th Terrace
Raytown, MO 64133-3803

I am interested in obtaining good copies of the videos of Romy Schneider: *L'Important C'est D'aimer* (*The Most Important thing is Love*) from 1975, *Max et les Ferrailleurs* from 1971, and *Qui?* (*The Sensuous Assassin*) from 1970. I'll reimburse expenses for VHS tapes.

Eduardo Casale
9297 Siempre Viva Road
San Diego, CA 92173

I'm looking for VHS copies of the eight episodes of *Make Your Own Kind of Music*, a summer 1971 series which aired on NBC. It was hosted by Karen and Richard Carpenter. I will gladly reimburse expenses.

Debra Holster
7200 Webb-Ferrell Road
Arlington, TX 76018

Send those requests for hard-to-find tapes to Collector's Clearinghouse, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001. Video Magazine DOES NOT locate tapes; this is a reader-to-reader service only, so please do not send a self-addressed envelope. Requests for copyrighted material must be for personal use only. You may offer to reimburse expenses, but the Clearinghouse is not open to requests for the purchase or sale of tapes.



Panasonic introduces the WJ-AVE7 Digital Video Mixer. With Luminance Keying and over 100 special effects, it makes your videos especially effective.

Think of the new Panasonic

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Video

Mixer as

a way to

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charge



your imagination.

Dual PIP

Its sophisticated technology lets you do almost anything you can imagine at a price that's so affordable it's unimaginable. For instance, its Luminance Keying feature lets you alter reality by superimposing video images. Its auto take feature creates flawless transitions, automatically. Add dual picture-in-picture, a color corrector, over 100 digital effects, a built-in audio

mixing board and the optional video titler, WJ-TTL5, and

this Panasonic Video

Mixer lets you do almost anything you can conceive.

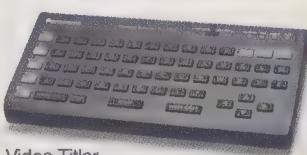
And

unlike other systems, the WJ-AVE7's digital synchronizer

lets you dissolve or wipe between any 2 NTSC signals.

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**WITH THE NEW PANASONIC
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IMAGINATION WILL RUN WILD
INSTEAD OF YOUR BUDGET.**

NEW PRODUCTS



EDITED BY BRIAN CLARK

New gear from CES

VCRs jockey for space with game machines, TVs vie for attention with multimedia boards: The annual Winter Consumer Electronics Show is getting underway in Las Vegas just as we go to press. Here's a look at some of the new products on display. Check out next month's issue for a full report on the show.

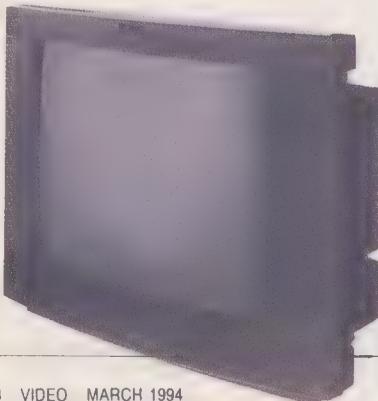
THE EYES HAVE IT ▾

JVC calls its new X'EYE game machine a multi-entertainment system. Based on the Sega CD and Genesis platforms, the RG-M10 console can play Sega game discs and cartridges, interactive discs designed for the system, audio CDs and CD+Graphic karaoke discs, and Electronic Book discs. Plug it into the TV and choose your medium. Look for it in April. It'll be bundled with Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia and priced at \$499. (For additional information, circle 110 on the Reader Service Card.)



▼ SAMSUNG UPGRADES TVs

Samsung's top 27-inch TV is the TXB2735 (\$799.95). It features MTS stereo with surround sound, auto-channel programming, front audio/video jacks, variable audio output jacks and a sleep timer. (For additional information, circle 109 on the Reader Service Card.)



BREAKTHROUGH BOX ▾

Videonics MX-1 Digital Video Mixer produces over 200 special effects, including strobe, mosaic, fades and wipes. It produces chroma-key effects, memorizes production commands and generates picture-in-picture effects. A dual-field timebase corrector is built in. A preview monitor lets you check the action of four video sources at once across the top of a screen. The price is \$1,199. (For additional information, circle 107 on the Reader Service Card.)



EP ALL-STAR ▾

Sharp's VC-H914U VHS VCR is a four-head hi-fi model that uses 26-micron video heads to enhance picture quality in the EP mode. Other features include a universal remote, a one-year/8-event timer, a real-time counter, front audio/video jacks, an auto head cleaner and MTS sound. The price is \$399. (For additional information, circle 101 on the Reader Service Card.)



UNIQUE DESIGN ▾

The DA800 loudspeaker from Design Acoustics has a unique five-sided design with a down-firing woofer. The 3/4-inch tweeter is placed below the midrange in another switch from conventional speaker design. Measuring 9 x 15 1/2 x 11 inches (w/h/d), the DA800s are sized for bookshelves and priced at \$600 a pair. (For additional information, circle 108 on the Reader Service Card.)



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Chaplin	1108604
The Count Of Monte Cristo	1089903
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Groundhog Day	1108406



NEW RELEASES

BORN YESTERDAY (1993)	1152008
COP AND A HALF	1145903
DRAGON: THE BRUCE LEE STORY	1150705
GUILTY AS SIN	1173103
LIFE WITH MIKEY	1172709

Home Alone	0104208
Home Alone 2: Lost In New York	1104900
Malcolm X	1107903



A FEW GOOD MEN
1106301



MADE IN AMERICA
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Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III	1102706
A River Runs Through It	1087600

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Just write in the numbers of the 6 movies you want for 29¢ each, plus shipping and handling. In exchange, you agree to buy just six more movies in the next three years, at our regular Club prices (which currently start as low as \$19.95, plus shipping/handling)—and you may cancel membership at any time after doing so. What's more, you can get two more movies for the low price of \$6.95 each and have much less to buy later (see complete details in coupon).

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Buy only what you want! If you want the *Director's Selection*, do nothing—it will be sent automatically. If you'd prefer an alternate

selection, or none at all, just mail the response card always provided by the date specified. And you'll always have 14 days to decide; if not, you may return the selection at our expense.

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Also send still one more selection for an additional \$6.95 plus \$1.75 shipping/handling (total: \$28.74). I then need buy only 4 more (instead of 6) in 3 years.

AWH/AWL/AWP

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The Hand That Rocks The Cradle 1071109
Charlotte's Web 0209502
Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory 0606103
Boomerang 1064005
The Distinguished Gentleman 1107804
Scarface (1983) 0216804
Body Of Evidence 1120609
Rain Man 0285906
The Bible... In The Beginning 0074708
My Girl 0693406
Death Becomes Her 1071505
Single White Female 1061407
White Men Can't Jump 1014406
Grease 0207407
9½ Weeks 0270801
Universal Soldier 1059104
Field Of Dreams 0920306
Medicine Man 1070408
Annie 0151605
Top Gun 0426908
Consenting Adults 1101609
Kindergarten Cop 0523407
The Greatest Story Ever Told 0085506
City Slickers 0862904

NEW PRODUCTS



MAGIC WAND ▲

The One For All 8 Upgradable (\$39) replaces up to eight remote controls for components that include tuners, amplifiers and satellite receivers. Universal Electronics, manufacturer of the One For All line, will upgrade the remote free of charge, adding any missing codes to the programmed selection. The Key Magic feature lets you assign specific functions to different keys. (For additional information, circle 103 on the Reader Service Card.)

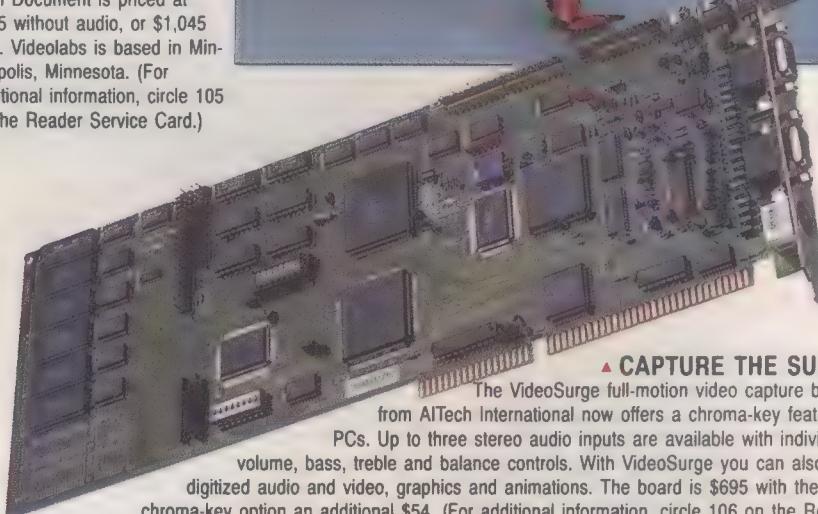


HOME BASS ▲

The 252 PBM bass module from Atlantic Technology is a home theater subwoofer that has a built-in three-channel amplifier. The user decides where the power goes—90 watts to the sub or 120 spread through three channels. It can serve as the total power source for a three-piece system. There are two line-level RCA inputs and one high-level input, plus connections for two speakers. The 252 PBM is priced at \$549. (For additional information, circle 102 on the Reader Service Card.)

DESKTOP VIDEO CAMERA ▶

Videolabs' FlexCam Document is a desktop color document camera. The lens can focus down to 1/4-inch, and the camera produces 350 lines of resolution. Audio is optional—two RCA jacks output the audio from two microphones. Video output is available in both composite and component (S-video) form, NTSC and PAL. The FlexCam Document is priced at \$995 without audio, or \$1,045 with. Videolabs is based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (For additional information, circle 105 on the Reader Service Card.)



▲ CAPTURE THE SURGE

The VideoSurge full-motion video capture board from ATech International now offers a chroma-key feature for PCs. Up to three stereo audio inputs are available with individual volume, bass, treble and balance controls. With VideoSurge you can also add digitized audio and video, graphics and animations. The board is \$695 with the chroma-key option an additional \$54. (For additional information, circle 106 on the Reader Service Card.)

PLUG IN, LIGHT UP ▶

Sima's Universal Battery Eliminator (\$34) lets you use your car or boat battery in place of your 6-volt camcorder battery. Its 6-foot cord fits into a cigarette lighter socket. (For additional information, circle 100 on the Reader Service Card.)



THE KEF THX THEATER ▶

KEF's new THX home theater speaker system consists of (left to right) the AV1 subwoofer, the AV3 LCR loudspeaker and the AV2 surround speaker. A complete system consists of one subwoofer, three AV3 LCRs (left, center, right) and two AV2s. The full system is priced at \$7,000. The pieces are also available separately. (For additional information, circle 104 on the Reader Service Card.)



GIVE US YOUR BEST SHOT!

VISIONS

10



ENTER THE 10TH ANNUAL
VISIONS OF U.S. VIDEO CONTEST—WIN VALUABLE SONY PRIZES!

For ten years, VISIONS OF U.S. has discovered a wealth of new creative talent in the premiere video contest of our time. This year it's your turn to create an original video production and have your work judged by video professionals—with the chance to win valuable Sony prizes. The contest, sponsored by Sony and administered by the American Film Institute, is an invitation to express your vision—on 8mm, VHS or Beta. Just choose a category—fiction, non-fiction, music video or experimental—and start shooting. Submit your work by June 15, 1994 and a distinguished panel of judges comprised of Francis Ford Coppola, LeVar Burton, Kathleen Kennedy, Tim Allen, Bob Saget, Penelope Spheeris, Julia Louis-Dreyfus and Sean Astin will begin the judging process. You'll be in competition for an exciting selection of Sony video products and everyone who enters will receive a bonus blank videocassette. To find out more, call (213) 856-7787. Or write Visions of U.S., 1080 Hollywood, California 90078.



VISIONS



The American Film Institute

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SONY

Hands-free shooting with the HeadTrip

When I was a college senior, I had the idea I would make a point-of-view documentary about my graduation. This being prior to the Camcorder Age, I borrowed a silent Super-8 film camera and concocted a way to carry it under my arm. The movie I shot was a goofy, real-time document of what I saw as I received my diploma: the stairs leading to the outdoor stage, a smile from the college president, then the paper tube handed over and a handshake.

It was fun to shoot, but it was nothing like the POV video I was able to make with the HeadTrip, an intriguing hands-free camcorder system from a Colorado company of the same name. HeadTrip's I-am-a-camera setup consists of a miniature video camera connected by cable to an 8mm VCR worn in a fanny pack. While it's not entirely unique (Panasonic's broadcast division makes a similar device called Helmet-Cam that's intended for police use), HeadTrip's device is the only one we know that's designed for ordinary folk with a taste for outdoor adventure.

HeadTrip's camera is the cigar-sized XC-999 from Sony's professional division. Weighing only half a pound, it has manual iris and focus controls, and automatic white balance. It's mounted either on an elastic strap worn as a headband or built into a helmet. The wide angle lens shoots whatever its wearer is facing. The recorder is Sony's GV-M20 Video Walkman, which is mounted within a protective metal shell built into the fanny pack.

The Walkman has been modified to make it work better in the great outdoors, which was what inspired HeadTrip in the first place. An electret condenser mic, lavalier style, is patched into the audio input, which is otherwise disabled. The mic, covered by a wind filter, runs to the outside of the fanny pack where it picks up ambient sounds, like the whoosh of skis flying down a slope.

HeadTrip has also patched Sony's RM-94 wired remote control into the Walkman and nestled it in a transparent sleeve outside the pack. This lets wearers start and stop the camera without

having to go into the pack. Power comes from a 12-volt rechargeable battery, enough for two hours of continuous taping, even in cold weather.

HeadTrip-the-company is based in Vail. It started renting units to mountain bikers on Vail Mountain last summer. This winter, it's been renting to skiers at Vail and Beaver Creek. The price is \$40 for the first hour, \$20 for each additional hour and \$15 to transfer your 8mm recording to VHS (for further information, call 303-949-9048.)



Up Close & Personal:
A skier wears HeadTrip with the camera fixed to an elastic headband. The helmet version (above) shows the Video Walkman resting inside the fanny pack.

The appeal is simple: It gives everyone the ability to tape their downhill thrills in situations where using a traditional camcorder is awkward, impossible or potentially hazardous—and to do so in a way that's genuinely exciting. If your secret dream is to make a movie about your life, the HeadTrip is a great tool for shooting the action scenes.

Mindful of HeadTrip's potential appeal to adventurers beyond those at Colorado ski resorts, the company will soon be offering its hands-free system for sale. Available this spring, the hand-crafted units will be priced at \$4,250. They will be fitted with a sturdier, industrial version of the Video Walkman, and a smaller camera with an auto iris and a faster (1/4000-second) shutter.

To see how well the original Head-

Trip performs, I took one on a bike ride up and down a few miles of rolling hills in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Granted, it wasn't the Rockies, but the experience was still a lot of fun.

Set up was easy. For the VCR, all I had to do was insert the battery (which powers both the VCR and the camera), turn on the Video Walkman and pop in a tape. Turning to the camera, I set the manual iris to HeadTrip's recommended setting of f/11 and the manual focus to infinity (future rental versions will use a

camera with auto iris for easier exposure). With the fanny pack still open, I turned on the Video Walkman's three-inch monitor so I could see what the camera was seeing, and adjusted the camera so it would point straight ahead while I biked.

First though, not wanting to forego bicycle safety, I had to tape the camera to my bike helmet (HeadTrip sent me the headband version). With the camera fixed in place and the VCR pack resting above my tailbone, all I had to do to start recording was look back and press the orange record button on the pack's side-mounted remote control. A black dot on the remote's LCD window confirmed that the tape was moving. I hopped onto the bike and headed into the countryside. Wearing the 6-1/2-pound pack was no strain, but I had to strap my helmet extra tight so that the side with the camera wouldn't droop. (Afterwards, I noticed a scab where the tight chin strap had been chafing me.)

The tape? A lot of fun to look at. The pictures looked fine, and the wide-angle views weren't as bumpy as I expected, although I soon tired of watching

continued on page 36



Introducing the *Ultimate* Cables for Home Theatre

High Performance THX-Certified Speaker Cable



These unique two and three channel cables offer easy hook up, decorator jackets, and excellent sound reproduction.

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Advanced performance – New Monster Cable® MC 3F HT
High performance – Monster® XPHP 3F HT
Improved performance – Monster XP® 3F HT

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Monster's special six-channel home theatre interconnects are designed for clean installations and easy hook up of all six channels. Monster's RCAs provide the highest integrity signal transfer. Also available with easy-to-use DB-25 connectors.

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Interlink® 406 HT – Bandwidth Balanced®, Turbine® RCAs
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P2P-2R • CL

Monster's CL3/FT4 rated two conductor in-wall speaker cables now with THX-certification ensure the highest performance custom home theatre installation.

High Performance

P2P-2R • CL – Time Correct® windings, twisted pair

Standard Performance

S14-2R • CL – 12 gauge twisted pair construction
S14-2R • CL – 14 gauge twisted pair construction
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High Resolution Video Cable*



Monster Video® Series 3

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Monster SuperVideo 3 S-Video – Ultra low capacitance
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User Friendly Cable Hook Up

Universal THX color-coding

Advanced Connector Design

DB-25 single connection;
Turbine Design® RCA;
Monster® Spades & Bananas

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Aesthetically Pleasing

Low profile design; paintable jackets

Patented Monster® Technologies

Improved soundtrack reproduction

MONSTER HOME THEATRE

Maximizing the Home Theatre Experience

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HOME THEATER

BY BRENT BUTTERWORTH

A timeshifting super-system combines 12 VCRs and computer control

At *Video Magazine*, the audio/video systems we like best are usually those that perform the best, with state-of-the-art picture and sound. But we realize that for many readers, other aspects of system design are at least equally important. So when reader Paul Levy of Los Angeles sent us photos and diagrams of his system—designed around his addiction to timeshifting up to 12 shows a day—we decided his unique ideas about audio/video systems were worth closer examination.

To facilitate his intense recording schedule, Levy's system is packed with VCRs—five Betas, three VHS decks, one Hi8 and three 8mm— all controlled

by computer. Each week or so, Levy consults *TV Guide*, *OnSat* satellite TV directory, and the monthly schedules for HBO and Cinemax. He enters the date, time and channel (or satellite transponder) of each show he wants to record into his computer's data base, selects the deck, tape length and format he wants to record on, and the computer automatically triggers the right deck at the right time. The computer also uses this data to print tape labels, along with a hard-copy schedule for daily reference.

Before Levy puts the labels on his tapes, he leaves them for his wife to look over. She uses a blue highlighter to indicate the programs she wants to watch

with Levy, and a yellow one to mark those she'd just as soon pass up. "I watch everything that I tape; she's much more selective," Levy says.

The centerpiece of Levy's ambitious system is a rack that stretches almost to the ceiling. It contains two video tuners, five VCRs, a satellite receiver, a de-scrambler, an audio cassette deck, a CD player, and various components for switching, amplification and surround-sound decoding. The rack is a simple design, with straight sides and unadorned shelves, giving Levy's system a "tower of equipment" look guaranteed to appeal to gear-heads.

In a mirror behind the rack, you can see that the rack's 16 components contribute to a wiring harness that would look more at home in a recording studio. But Levy's tidy wiring job keeps the rack looking neat—it dominates his living room, but doesn't clutter it. The rack is mounted on a Lazy Susan base, so Levy can spin it around for quick access. It's hooked to the ceiling with metal bars to keep the rack from falling over in one of California's frequent earthquakes. "Fortunately, the supports have never been tested," Levy says.

As you might expect from his numerous components, Levy has been assembling his system for years. "I've been into video since the first Betamax came out. I started with a crude system and continually upgraded it—it's been evolving for 17 years," he reports. "Between reading *Video Magazine* and attending the Consumer Electronics Show—I used to be a satellite dealer—I kept falling in love with new electronic components."

The control center for this complex system is a computer using the CORE remote system, developed by Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak. "I became interested in universal remotes when I was selling satellite systems," Levy says. "Back then, satellite receivers had no timers. I got involved with beta-testing the CORE remotes, which were designed to allow computer control of audio/video equipment."

"The CORE has 16 pages of on-screen controls—it's like having 16 remotes on top of one another," he continues. "You access each layer with a

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DAT	DAY	FROM TO	CH#	NAME OF PROGRAM	ST	TP	SET	MD-IN-OUT
SATURDAY								
1/10/93	SAT	3:40e-6:05a	G516	SLAVES OF NEW YORK(2:05)<Bernard SS/M(1:T)	**			(42)(P28)
1/10/93	SAT	6p-9:58p	C420	BILLY BATHGATE-Dustin Hoffman(1:T)	**			(41)(P21)
1/10/93	SAT	6p-11p	2	DR. QUINN / RAVEN / HAT SQUAD	7	(K)		
1/10/93	SAT	6p-9p	5	RENEGADE	T20(X)			
1/10/93	SAT	8:30p-9p	4	POWERS THAT BE	M11(WQ)			
SUNDAY								
1/10/93	SUN	3:25e-5a	G508	L.A.BOUNTY(1:25)<Wings Hauser>	**	V	(W)	(40)(P28)
1/10/93	SUN	7p-9:58p	2	60 MINUTES / MURDER SHE WROTE	-	(WQ)		
1/10/93	SUN	9p-11p	4	ELVIS & THE COLONEL(MFTV)	-	(X)		
1/10/93	SUN	9p-11p	7	DEAD BEFORE DAWN (MFTV)	5	(K)		5720
MONDAY								
1/11/93	MON	4:15e-6:04a	G516	THE DARK BACKWARD(1:44)<Judd Ni**	M	(T)		(42)(P28)
1/11/93	MON	2p-3:45p	C422	THE TAKING OF BEV.HILLS(1:35)<Ke**	M	(T)		(43)(P28)
1/11/93	MON	9p-11p	4	RELENTLESS: Mind of a Killer(MFTV)	5	(K)		
1/11/93	MON	9p-10p	2	MURPHY BROWN / LOVE & WAR	M11(WQ)			
TUESDAY								
1/12/93	TUE	2:20e-4:20a	G516	IN TOO DEEP(1:50)	**	(O)		(42)(P28)
1/12/93	TUE	8p-11p	13	INTOUCHABLES(2HrDebut/DEEP SP)	7	(K)		
1/12/93	TUE	9p-11p	C304	BETTER OFF DEAD	M	(T)		(25)(P28)
1/12/93	TUE	9p-11p	1	COMPLEX OF FEAR (MFTV)	V	(X)		2812
1/12/93	TUE	9p-9:30p	7	ROSEANNE	-	(WQ)		
1/12/93	TUE	10p-11p	7	JACK'S PLACE (Debut)	-	(WQ)		
WEDNESDAY								
1/13/93	WED	3:50e	G508	THE UNBORN(1:25)<Brooke Adams>	**	ML	(T)	(40)(P28)
1/13/93	WED	7:16a	G508	PAPER MASK(1:46)<Paul McCann>	**	ML	(T)	(41)(P21)
1/13/93	WED	11:30e-11:3p	C420	BETTER OFF DINNER(1:33)<Brian Wimm**	V	(W)		
1/13/93	WED	8p-9p	2	SPACE RANGERS	V	(X)		
1/13/93	WED	8p-9:30p	7	WONDER YEARS/DOOGIE/HOME IMPF	7	(K)		
1/13/93	WED	9:30p-11p	4	MAD ABOUT YOU / LAW&ORDER	-	(K)		
1/13/93	WED	9p-11p	G121	SURVIVE THE NIGHT (MFC)	T	(T)		(20)(P28)
1/13/93	WED	10p-11p	7	GOING TO EXTREMES	-	(X)		26961
1/13/93	WED	11:30p-11:00a	G508	HBO's 20th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL(1:30)**	5	(O)		(40)(P28)
THURSDAY								
1/14/93	THU	4:10e-5:12a	G508					
1/14/93	THU	8p-9:35p						
1/14/93	THU	8p-						
1/14/93	THU	9p-						
1/14/93	THU	10p-						

Technical Ecstasy: Levy's computer system (top) prints out his recording schedule (above) and programs a rack packed with VCRs (right).



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Mic techniques that keep your subjects from going audio AWOL

Once you get serious about shooting video, one of the first things you realize is that the microphone on your camcorder just doesn't cut it—especially if more than one person is speaking in the video. In this situation, you should consider adding a mic boom or multiple mics to your collection of camcorder accessories. Both create sound quality far superior to that of your camcorder's mic. Which method you choose depends on how many people work with you, what you want to shoot and how much you want to spend.

The advantage of using a boom over hand-holding a mic is its extra reach. Your boom operator can get the microphone close enough to your subjects to ensure good sound quality while not appearing in your shot. Also, a boom's rigidity spares the operator the fatigue of holding his or her arm extended for prolonged takes.

For about \$10, you can make your own portable "fishpole" mic boom with

a three-foot length of 3/8-inch dowel from your local hardware store, and a clamp-style mic holder available at most electronics parts stores (including Radio Shack). Screw the mic holder onto the dowel and make sure it's firmly seated—that's all it takes.

To use your mic boom, you'll need an external microphone and some means of getting the sound into your camcorder (as well as a family member or friend to act as the boom operator). The best external mic to use depends on how near to the subject the boom operator gets, although a cardioid mic (one that picks up audio in a 240-degree, heart-shaped pattern) is a good general-purpose solution.

There are two ways to get the sound from the boom mic into your camcorder: Purchase an extension cable (extensions for headphones sometimes also work), or use a wireless handheld mic. Extension cords are cheap (under \$10 for a 25-foot coiled cable), but shooting flex-

ibility is limited. Also, when using a cable, you have to be careful not to let it cross electrical cords, or you'll hear a low hum.

A wireless handheld microphone gives you and the boom operator freedom to move about. However, they are costly—\$100 for a low-end FM model, \$200 and up for VHF—and they're generally omnidirectional. Unless you shoot all conversations in close-up, you won't be able to get the boom near enough for decent sound quality. Ideally, you should use a wireless transmitter built into a directional mic—many companies that manufacture wireless mics offer this option in their high-end packages.

While a boom is the simplest, cheapest solution to recording more than one person, it's not the only one. Often, giving each speaker a separate wireless lavalier mic is preferable, as it enables you to shoot freely without worrying about the boom operator stumbling into the middle of the action.

For shoots where you're using two or more mics, you'll need a portable audio mixer, unless you're lucky enough to own a camcorder with two mic inputs. Fortunately, several mixers designed for use with camcorders are available for under \$100. These mixers are generally small and camcorder-mountable, and have at least two inputs and one output. A tip: Before using your mixer in the field, experiment with it and your lavalières at home so you get comfortable with it.

When you're on location, plug your headphones into the camcorder rather than the mixer, as that's where the audio ends up. Give all those who will be speaking their own lavalier and, before shooting, have them converse normally for a few minutes as you listen through the headphones. Using the mixer's volume controls, balance the levels by raising or lowering each mic's volume until everyone can be clearly heard.

Once levels are set, roll tape and, as the subjects talk, listen through the headphones for background hiss, electronic hum, and excessive loudness or softness. Don't be afraid to have them stop and start over. You may feel like a pest, but you'll feel worse if the audio recording turns out to be distorted or *continued on page 53*



Free At Last:

Wireless mics let you move around freely even when recording sound from multiple subjects. Shown are Azden's WL/T-Pro lavalier mic/transmitter, WM/T-Pro hand-held mic/transmitter and WR-Pro receiver.

Imagine being able to assemble your home videos the same way you put together your photo album... keep your best shots, get rid of the ones you don't like and arrange them in any order. Now you can with JVC's GR-AX75U "Video Album Maker" compact VHS camcorder.



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Q&A

BY RODERICK WOODCOCK

Blacked tape, audio levels and speckles

Q Could you shed some light on the subject of "blacking" a videotape before using it? I've heard this is considered standard practice in professional circles, but haven't been able to confirm the legitimacy of the procedure. My format is Hi8. — Thomas A. Beier

Bethlehem Pennsylvania

A To "black" a videotape, you run it through your VCR or camcorder in the record mode, using a black generator as a video signal source, or more simply by capping the camcorder lens and (optionally) disabling the microphone input to prevent any audio from being recorded. This replaces the blank tape with a black video signal and a control track (or equivalent—the 8mm format uses a substitute called automatic track finding) that's comparable to videotaping a black wall with no audio. The control track is necessary for insert editing.

Some advocates of blacking also claim the process helps to limber up a tape prior to being used for a valuable recording, removing stray bits of metal or oxide particles and conforming and equalizing the tape tension on the reels. Others say it makes it easier to detect dropouts and other tape problems in advance. But this requires viewing the blacked tape, which can be time-consuming and tedious, even if searched at high speed.

Q For the past eight years, I've been using a VHS hi-fi VCR as an audio-only deck to record my favorite music selections from CDs. If I use high-grade tape, I can get up to eight hours of fabulous music quality on a single cassette, and most times I can't tell the difference in sound between the CD and the tape.

My problem now is trying to find a new hi-fi VCR that has manually adjustable audio level controls. Is there any way I can bypass the automatic level control circuit on some of these newer models so I can restore full dynamic range to my future recordings?

Carl Johnson
Lake Orion, Michigan

A Sadly, it's true that the recent trend in VCR design is to replace manually adjustable audio levels with a fully automatic circuit. The VU LEDs may

now be redundant, from a practical point of view, but probably will persist in subsequent designs, since they add to the esthetics of the machine.

Given the highly integrated circuitry of the newer machines, retrofitting one to add this missing feature might not be possible. My best suggestion would be to just look around for an older model that still offers it. Instead of the major chains and discount outlets, take a look at the inventory of the smaller specialty dealers. Since they sell service, rather than price, it often takes them a longer time to sell through on the older models. This is one case where older is better.

Q Before I bought a laserdisc player, no one told me that discs can have defects like speckles or other noise that resembles dropouts on videotape. I usually notice this near the beginning of a side.

This isn't a regular problem with the discs I view, but I haven't seen any mention of it anywhere except in a used disc catalog, where I read the term "speckles". What causes this? Is it common, or is there something wrong with my machine?

Jeff Ratcliff
Wichita, Kansas

A The dropout-like problem that consumers have come to call "speckles" is referred to by Pioneer as "inclusion," meaning any imperfection or manufacturing defect which degrades the image quality. As you've discovered, not all discs are affected by the problem. While Pioneer, and other disc pressing plants, attempt to QC as many discs as possible before placing them in the retail pipeline, defective discs continue to reach consumers.

Fortunately, it's rare for all pressings of a single title to be affected the same way, and most laserdisc dealers are more than happy to exchange a bad disc for a new one that's defect-free.

Video Magazine welcomes your questions. Please include a phone number, but not a return envelope as the volume of mail does not permit replies. All letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address queries to Q & A, Video Magazine, 460 West 34 Street, New York, NY 10001.

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you'll not only be able to create



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VIDEOTESTS



Feature Fest: Sony's SLV-R1000 combines timeshifting features like VCR Plus and cable box control with editing features like audio and video dub.



SONY S-VHS VCR

an edit controller or a desktop video product. There are countless LAN-compatible products available. The only



Sony SLV-R1000 S-VHS VCR

Price: \$1,499

Weight & Size (h/w/d):
15.5 lbs., 4-5/8 x 17 x
15 inches

Jacks:

front—S-video/video/
stereo audio input,
LANC; rear—2 S-video/
video/stereo audio inputs,
2 S-video/video/
stereo audio outputs,
RF in and out, Control
S in, cable box control

Tape Speeds:
SP, LP (play only), EP

Serious amateur videographers have always valued Sony's editing VCRs because they have LANC remote control jacks. A LANC jack lets another piece of equipment control the VCR. That piece of equipment can be another VCR, a

other editing control standard to find widespread acceptance has been Panasonic's five-pin Control M protocol.

The SLV-R1000 is Sony's latest editing VCR. It's an S-VHS deck with full editing features, including a flying erase head, audio dub and video dub. The only major editing features it lacks are a headphone jack and a jog/shuttle dial.

It partially makes up for the lack of jog/shuttle control with Sony's dual-mode shuttle, which combines play and stop buttons inside a shuttle ring. The remote has frame advance buttons which let you find an exact frame, but they're not as convenient as a jog dial. From the front panel, there's no way to

Video Heads: 4

Cue & Review Search:
7x SP, 21x EP; plus
variable-speed search
with the shuttle ring,
and visible fast-forward
and rewind by holding
down those buttons
when in use

Fast Forward/Rewind
Time: 4-1/2 min. for
T-120 cassette

Remote Pause: LANC
and Control S

Program Start
Locator/Index/Cue: in-
dex with auto/manual
mark and manual erase
of marks

Audio: linear mono,
hi-fi AFM stereo

Cable Tuning Range:

2 to 13, A-8 to A-1, A

to W, W+1 to W+84

Timer:
8-event/1-month

Clock/Timer Backup:
3 hours

Special Features:
frame advance, slow
motion, speed play,
audio dub, video dub,
insert edit, six-scene
edit controller, VCR
Plus with cable box
control, backlit remote,
automatic door, flying
erase head

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution:
S-VHS 400 lines, VHS
240 lines

HIGHLIGHTS

Sony's SLV-R1000 is the successor to the SLV-R5, one of our all-time-favorite S-VHS decks. It can be used as a playback or recording deck with LANC-compatible editing controllers and desktop video equipment. It offers many editing features, like audio dub and video dub, as well as VCR Plus with cable box control, for easy timeshifting. Picture quality is good to very good (not quite up to the SLV-R5's standard), audio is excellent and overall performance is very good. At \$1,499, it's priced a bit high, because some less expensive decks outperform it. But if you want a LANC-compatible S-VHS deck, this is your only choice.

S/N Ratios (dB): un-
weighted luminance—
42.8 SP, 41.6 EP;
weighted luminance—
47.9 SP, 45.4; un-
weighted video—43.2
SP, 43.4 EP; weighted
video—48.9 SP, 50.4
EP; chroma AM—47.6
SP, 43.7 EP; chroma
PM—41.6 SP, 37.7 EP

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range:
81.4 dB

Linear Audio S/N:
43.4 dB

Audio Distortion: hi-fi
0.3%, linear 0.8%

RATINGS

Picture:
good/very good

Audio: excellent

Overall: very good

find a specific frame.

The deck also has VCR Plus with cable box control, so you can program both your VCR and cable box by simply entering a numerical code from TV Guide or your local listings.

To control the cable box, Sony includes a Cable Mouse—a small, tethered infrared emitter that plugs into a jack on the SLV-R1000's rear panel. There's also conventional onscreen programming if you prefer.

To improve the picture quality of recordings, Sony uses Adaptive Picture Control (APC), which adjusts the video circuitry to match the characteristics of each tape you use. The deck also has an index search system with automatic and manual marking and erase, dedicated buttons for high-speed rewind, a remote that controls most TVs and cable boxes, an easy-to-read LCD display with backlighting and an onscreen help system that gives a tone and an onscreen message if you perform an incorrect operation.

Unless used with an edit controller, LANC is usually not terribly accurate—we found cuts between a Sony camcorder and the SLV-R5 to be late by about 40 frames on average (that's 1-1/3-second). The manual says that more precise editing is possible when the SLV-R1000 is used with three camcorders: the CCD-TR900, the CCD-TR1000 and the CCD-TR1. We haven't heard of these camcorders—perhaps they're Japanese models, perhaps they're planned for a future U.S. introduction.

With other LANC machines (a group that includes most Sony camcorders and clones from Nikon, Yashica, etc.; and some Canon Hi8 camcorders and Sony 8mm, Hi8 and S-VHS VCRs), the SLV-R1000 may act as either master (recording deck) or a slave (playback deck). For machines with only Control S, like some VHS and Beta models, it accepts control signals but does not generate them.

The jack panel is one of the best we've seen on a VCR. It has two complete sets of S-video/video/stereo audio inputs and outputs. This panel should make it easy to connect the SLV-R1000 to any A/V system.

The SLV-R1000 is extremely easy to

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VIDEOTEST
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MITSUBISHI 27-inch TV

In our recent 27-inch TV comparison test ("27-Inch Super Bowl," Nov. '93), we omitted a few sets because the manufacturers had just started production and were unable to get them to us in time. One such set is the Mitsubishi CS-27701, the company's first direct-view set with a reduced-curvature screen. Had the CS-27701 been included, it definitely would have ranked among the top sets.

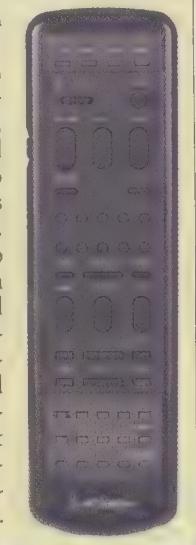
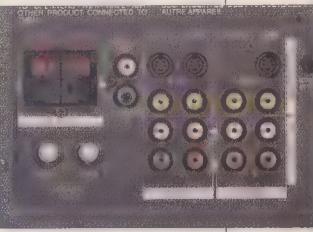
The CS-27701 follows the two current trends in direct-view set design: flatter and darker. Like the Panasonic Gao and Sony XBR² sets, its screen is much less curved than those of conventional sets, and uses a dark tint on the faceplate to enhance contrast and increase color saturation.

The set is packed with features. Most unusual is its motorized base. Two

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HIGHLIGHTS

The CS-27701 is Mitsubishi's entry in the reduced-curvature direct-view TV set field. It has a terrific picture, at least the equal of any 27-inch set we've tested. Two buttons on the remote make the motorized base swivel 15 degrees in either direction. The set offers a wide range of picture adjustments, and an illuminated remote that also operates two VCRs and a cable box. The sound is also quite good, with a separate woofer and two sound expansion modes for simulated surround sound. We recommend it without hesitation to anyone who can handle the \$1,499 price.

Flat First:
The CS-27701 is Mitsubishi's first direct-view TV with a reduced-curvature screen. At right is its extensive rear jack panel.



User Friendly: Hitachi's VT-S772 has manual audio level control and a front-panel editing jack and S-VHS input. A jog/shuttle dial's on the remote.



HITACHI S-VHS VCR

it's functionally quite similar to Hitachi's last S-VHS deck, the VT-S451A introduced four years ago, its minimalist design owes little to older decks.

The VT-S772A's most unusual feature is a tape door that slides down automatically when an object passes within a

Sometimes it seems like all VCRs come from the same design lab—they mostly look the same, and have controls in more or less the same places. Hitachi's new top-of-the-line VCR, the VT-S772A, is a refreshing exception. Although

few inches of it. The door is triggered by two sensors located underneath, flanking the VCR's display panel. The door doesn't really add anything in terms of convenience or functions, but it's a real attention getter. We thought it might prove annoying over the long haul, but that wasn't the case. And the VCR's menu system lets you disable the auto door, anyway (in which case you have to open it with the eject button on the front of the deck).

The deck offers a surprising number of editing features, including audio dub, video dub, a flying erase head and a jog/shuttle dial on the remote (for more on these features, see "Editing VCR Buying Guide," Jan. '94). It also has a one-page character generator with three type sizes. The characters are nothing fancy

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Hitachi VT-S772A S-VHS VCR

Price: \$999

Weight & Size (h/w/d):
13.4 lbs., 3-7/8 x
18-1/8 x 14-1/8 inches

Jacks: front—S-video/
video/stereo audio input,
headphones, edit in/out;
rear—video/stereo
audio input, S-video output,
2 video/stereo

audio outputs, RF in
and out

Tape Speeds: SP, LP
(play only), EP

Video Heads: 4

Rapid Search: index
and counter go-to

Cue & Review Search:

shuttle ring—pause,
slow, 1x, 2x and 3x;
fast-forward and rewind
buttons (approx.), locking—5x SP, 15x EP;
nonlocking—10x SP,
25x EP

Fast Forward/Rewind
Time: 2-1/4 min. for
T-120 cassette

Remote Pause: Hitachi
synchro edit

Program Start Loca-
tor/Index/Cue: index,
go-to counter number

Audio: linear mono,
hi-fi AFM stereo

Titles/Graphics:
3 type sizes, one page
of title memory, record-
able time/date/channel
display

Cable Tuning Range:
2 to 13, A-5 to A-1, A
to W, W+1 to W+28,
W+29 to W+84

Timer: 8-event/1-year

Special Features:
frame advance, slow
motion, speed play, au-
dio dub, video dub,
insert edit, six-scene

HIGHLIGHTS

Hitachi's \$999
VT-S772A is one
of the most unusu-
al VCRs in years.

It's a full-featured S-VHS editing deck wrapped in a sleek chassis with an automatic tape door. It offers a six-scene edit controller (compatible with some Hitachi and RCA gear), a character generator and other editing features. It has a unique VCR Plus system with an LCD on the remote that confirms timeshifting com-
mands. However, the VCR Plus cir-
cuitry can't control cable boxes.
Picture quality is good to very good,
audio is very good and overall per-
formance is good to very good. Serious
videophiles may want better perfor-
mance, but owners of synchro edit-
equipped Hitachi VCRs will find this
an ideal editing deck.

edit controller, VCR
Plus, backlit remote,
automatic door, flying
erase head

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution:
S-VHS 400 lines, VHS
240 lines

sponse: hi-fi—20
Hz-20 kHz, +0.4/-2.6
dB; linear, -3 dB—60
Hz-11 kHz SP, 60 Hz-4
kHz EP

Hi-Fi Dynamic Range:
81 dB

Linear Audio S/N:
42.3 dB

S/N Ratios (dB): un-
weighted luminance—
43.1 SP, 38.4 EP;
weighted luminance—
49.4 SP, 47.2 EP; un-
weighted video—44.2
SP, 42.5 EP; weighted
video—48 SP, 47.3 EP;
chroma AM—47.3, SP,
41.7 EP; chroma PM—
44.1 SP, 40.1 EP

Audio Distortion: hi-fi
0.3%, linear 0.9%

RATINGS

Picture: good/very
good

Audio: very good

Overall: good/very
good

HITACHI

THE ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

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Color viewfinder puts you in charge.*

NEW EIS APPROACH

Next, they created a better image stabilization system, one that would not degrade the picture quality. They used a 470,000 pixel CCD, the densest ever in a consumer camcorder. This breakthrough technology solved the EIS image degradation problem and allowed the engineers to include Hi8 picture quality with the best digital zoom.

* Image simulated.

in the business — up to 16X.

Hitachi engineering expertise in chip design and manufac-

turing gave them a leg up in making a processor that includes unique digital effects like sepia tone, sunset enhancement,

Advanced 470,000 pixel CCD provides stabilization without degradation.

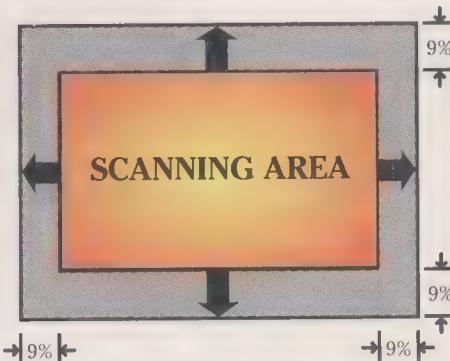
black and white, and the hot, new 16 x 9 mode.

To top off the VM-H39A

they added a color viewfinder to put you in the action and make it fun.

The Hitachi engineers are very proud of the work they did on the VM-H39A camcorder. *Video Magazine* was also impressed and awarded Hitachi its prestigious Viva Gold Award for the VM-H39A in its January 1993 issue.

Go and experience this incredible camcorder yourself. You'll see why the VM-H39A truly represents Excellence in Engineering.



For more information on the Hitachi VM-H39A, please write:

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Inside the VM-H39A Hi8 Camcorder

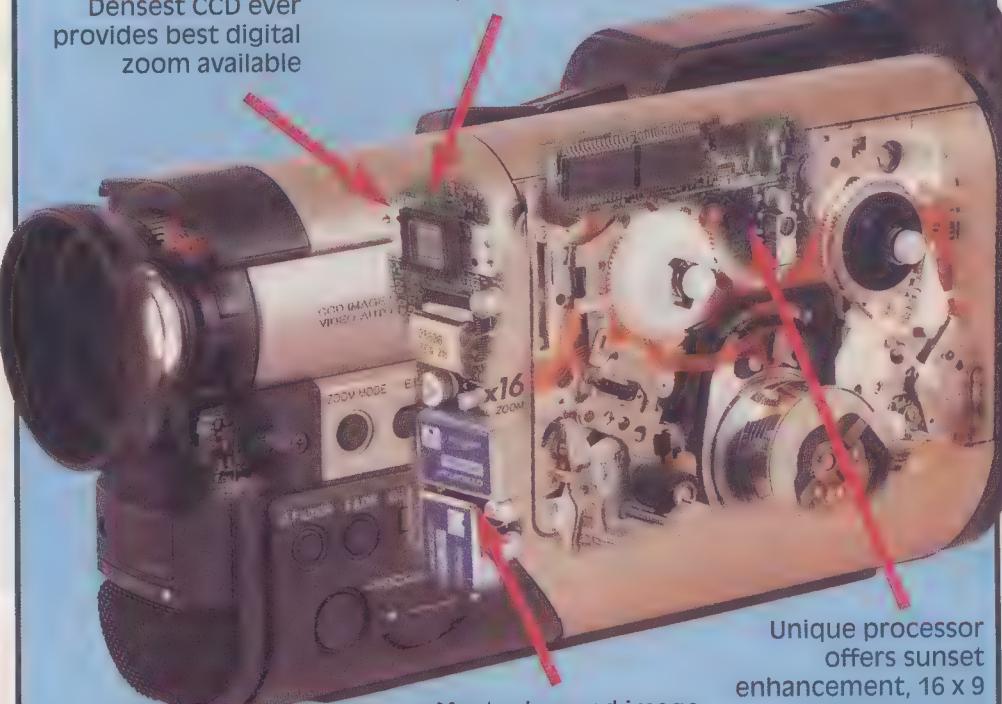
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CCD eliminates

EIS image degradation

Color viewfinder puts
you in the action

Densest CCD ever
provides best digital
zoom available



"Marvelously light and com-
fortable...amazing quality of
digital effects and zoom."
Video Magazine January 1993

VIDEOTESTS



The Old Switcheroo:

The JX-S700 packs seven sets of device inputs, all with S-video and stereo audio jacks, a monitor output and an auxiliary audio input.



**VIDEOTEST
724**

JVC
A/V
switcher

formats. Incorporating all of these compo-

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JX-S700
Switcher

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Weight & Size (h/w/d):
8.4 lbs., 3-3/8 x 17-1/4 x 10-3/8 inches

Inputs: front—2 S-video/video/stereo audio (1 for processor loop); rear—6 S-video/video/stereo audio, one stereo audio

Outputs: front—2 S-video/video/stereo audio (1 for processor loop); rear—4 S-video/video/stereo audio (1 for monitor out), plus 300-watt unswitched AC outlet

Special Features: dual operate mode (independ-

nents into one system can be a frustrating task. Most A/V receivers can do the job, but if you rely on separate components, you need a switcher.

The JVC JX-S700 A/V switcher fills a void in the switcher market—it's more capable than a simple, inexpensive mixer like Azden's \$140 AVS-20 ("Videotests," Apr. '90), but less expensive than more advanced switchers like JVC's \$800 JX-S900 ("Videotests," May '89). The JX-S700 is a complex piece of equipment, with a design that can be rather confusing. For clarity, we'll describe its inputs and outputs separately.

dent monitoring or recording of input 7 on output 4 and monitor output), Y/C separation and mixing, key lock, processor loop, auxiliary audio input, loop protect

RESULTS

Horizontal Resolution: more than 800 lines

Picture S/N (dB): unweighted luminance 62.8, weighted luminance 68.5, unweighted video 65.6, weighted video 66.8, chroma AM 71.5, chroma PM 49.8, video crosstalk between channels less than -75 dB

Audio Frequency Response: 35 Hz-20 kHz, +1.1/-3 dB, -4.8 dB at 20 kHz

Audio S/N: 74.7 dB

Audio Crosstalk: less than -75 dB

Total Harmonic Distortion: less than 0.01 percent

RATINGS

Picture: excellent

Audio: very good/excellent

Overall: very good/excellent

HIGHLIGHTS

Today's complex audio/video systems often employ several source devices, making it difficult to connect them all. For many systems, JVC's JX-S700 switcher is an ideal solution, with seven inputs and five outputs. It has two limitations. First, it's difficult or impossible to watch one input and record from another unless you record from input 7 onto output 4. And second, you can't switch audio and video separately. It also has Y/C separation and mixing, so you can use any combination of S-video and composite video sources and outputs. Picture quality is excellent and audio quality is very good to excellent. At \$600, it's a good value.

- Inputs:** The JX-S700 has S-video/video/stereo audio inputs for seven devices. One of the inputs (number 3) is on the front panel, making it easy to hook up a camcorder. A user selects the input with buttons on the front panel. (JVC provides blank labels that fit under the buttons.)

- Outputs:** The switcher has five S-video/video/stereo audio outputs. Three of these outputs (one of which is on the front panel) simply carry whatever signal is selected using the seven buttons on the front panel. These are appropriate for connecting to the recording inputs of VCRs and audio

cassette decks. One output (number 4) carries the selected signal or the signal from input 7 — a button labeled "dual operate" switches between the two. The fifth output, labeled "monitor out," can also be switched (via a button on the remote) to carry the selected signal or the input 7 signal. The difference between using the monitor output and output 4 (with dual operate) is that the video signal from the monitor output can be muted with a button on the remote.

You can use any combination of S-video and composite inputs and outputs, because the JX-S700 has a Y/C (luminance/chrominance) separator and mixer. Thus, it will convert S-video signals to composite, and composite signals to S-video. The Y/C separator is just an average performer — it produces more dot crawl and hanging dots than the Y/C separators in recent high-end TVs and laserdisc players. But still, it's a big convenience — simpler switchers without these circuits sometimes require you to switch back and forth from composite to S-video input on your TV.

The switcher has several special features that add versatility and functionality. First is loop protect, which can be switched in from the front panel or

the remote. This circuit keeps the selected input from being routed to the identically numbered output, so input 1 can't be routed to output 1, and so on. This prevents the creation of feedback loops, which produce howling audio and flashing, distorted video. (Because loop protection is only effective on inputs 1 through 4, it's best to use these to connect VCRs or audio tape decks.)

There's also an auxiliary stereo audio input. Hitting the "audio aux" button on the front panel or the remote replaces the audio from the selected source with whatever's plugged into the auxiliary input. (The video from the original source remains.) You could use this as an eighth, audio-only input for a CD player or an AM/FM tuner.

A key lock feature (available from the remote or the front panel) lets you deactivate all controls except monitor video mute and monitor select. A front switch labeled power initial lets you select whether input 1, 2 or 7 is activated when the power is turned on.

A processor loop on the front panel provides S-video/video/stereo audio inputs and outputs that can be used to switch a video titler, an audio equalizer or another accessory into and out of the

system. The video and audio loops may be switched in and out independently from the remote or the front panel. Because the jacks for the loop are on the front, it's inconvenient to use with equipment that will be permanently connected (unless you like the look of cables hanging out of your system). The processor loop is convenient when you want to add titles or special effects while editing from one VCR to another, but if you're editing from a camcorder to a VCR, you're better off connecting the camcorder to the titler, and the titler into input 3.

Many A/V receivers and switchers (even the inexpensive Azden AVS-20) let you select any input for viewing, and any other input for recording. For example, the four-input AVS-20 uses output 1 for recording, and has a rotary switch that lets you select input 2, 3 or 4 for recording. Meanwhile, you can watch the signal from any input (they're selectable with buttons, as on the JX-S700) without affecting the recording process. In contrast, the JX-S700 only allows you to select input 7 independently, so you can record from input 7 (onto output 4) and watch something from another input, or watch input 7 while recording

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something from another input. Given that many switchers and A/V receivers offer greater flexibility, it's surprising JVC limited the JX-S700 in this area.

Likewise, many A/V receivers let you listen to the audio from any source while watching the video from any source, and the JX-S700 can't do that, either. We consider this a useful feature — you can watch TV broadcasts of sports events while listening to commentary from a radio broadcast, or chuck the commentary and listen to a CD. The auxiliary audio input gives you some of this facility, but again, not as much as many receivers offer.

When it comes to video and audio performance, we expect a switcher to be virtually transparent, having no visible or audible effect on signals. And for the most part, the JX-S700 delivers. With a rated video bandpass of 12 megahertz (beyond our measurement limit of 10 MHz, and way past the 6 MHz bandwidth of even the best NTSC video formats), the JX-S700 doesn't compromise detail at all. And with most video signal-to-noise ratio measurements well into the 60-decibel range, and insertion loss (the amount of signal lost by going through the switcher) less than 0.3 dB, you

shouldn't see a significant difference when comparing a direct signal with that from the switcher.

The audio response isn't perfect, but it's quite good — we rate it very good to excellent. Frequency response in the bass falls 3 dB at 35 Hertz, so you might notice a slight loss of bass if your system has speakers that reproduce the lowest octave (20 to 40 Hz) of bass. The JX-S700 also adds slightly more audio noise than we expected, with an S/N of 74.7 dB as compared to the JX-S900's 91.4 dB. In the vast majority of audio/video systems, you won't notice these problems at all.

Overall, we rate the JX-S700 very good to excellent. We recommend it heartily, but caution that you should study its features carefully, and see if they meet the demands of your system. ■

HITACHI VCR

continued from page 28

but if you don't have an outboard titler, you'll find the character generator useful.

It also has a six-scene edit controller for use with other synchro edit-equipped Hitachi VCRs. In this editing scenario, the VT-S772A serves as the player, the other Hitachi deck as the recorder. The VT-S772A's menu system has an on-screen display for the start and stop points of six scenes. You simply shuttle around on the VT-S772A to find the start point of a scene, hit a button on the remote to mark that point, find the end point of the scene and mark that, then go on to the next scene. Cursor and clear keys make it easy to correct your mistakes.

Unfortunately, the VT-S772A doesn't seem to work in the synchro edit mode we use most — as the recorder, with a camcorder used as the player. The manual doesn't discuss this option, and we couldn't get it to work with a Hitachi VM-H39A camcorder and synchro edit cable. Of course, you can still dub camcorder tapes.

The deck also offers VCR Plus, but cable TV fans be forewarned, though — while the remote will control a cable box, the VCR Plus circuitry will not.

The deck has nice audio features, including adjustable left and right hi-fi record level and a headphone jack with level control. A SpectraSonic button on the remote offers music and movie equalization modes, which apparently offer two levels of bass boost. These might prove useful if you're using a TV set with small speakers, but we found they made voices boomy.

The remote control has a button that illuminates the play, stop, channel



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and TV volume buttons. It operates many brands of TVs and cable boxes. Its transport controls are peculiarly placed—fast forward and rewind are above play, and to the left side. Hitting the frame advance button puts the deck into forward search mode for one minute of tape—great for skipping commercials. Many important buttons (like record and input select) are under a flap, making them inconvenient to use.

The deck itself is reasonably easy to use, with a few idiosyncrasies. The only S-video input is at the front—the rear input has only video and stereo audio jacks. Also, the S-video output on the rear panel is a long way from the other jacks, which could complicate hookup. However, basic playback controls on the front make this an unintimidating deck for technophobes.

Picture quality is good to very good—about the norm for the past year's crop of S-VHS decks, but not as good as the top consumer/prosumer S-VHS decks, JVC's HR-S6900 and Panasonic's AG-1970. The deck has a switch with three positions for sharp (edit), normal and AI (artificial intelligence, or noise reduction). The latter

position is intended for playback of beat-up rental tapes, but the difference in performance between these positions is very subtle. Audio performance is very good, with a fairly flat frequency response on the hi-fi tracks, and impressive bass extension to 60 Hertz on the linear tracks.

Overall, we rate the VT-S772A very good. You can get better picture quality for the money (in JVC's HR-S6900), but you may find the VT-S772A's combination of cool looks and editing features hard to resist, especially if you own a synchro edit-equipped Hitachi VCR. ■

SONY VCR

continued from page 27

set up and operate. It has dedicated buttons for many functions, and a large, fold-down panel that makes room for large buttons. A self-explanatory menu system makes the manual almost unnecessary. If you do need the manual, though, you'll enjoy using it—it's full of large pictures, and is set up with overall callout pictures and a good index so the sophis-

ticated user can find needed information without reading pages of overly simplified text.

Picture quality is good to very good, comparable to that of the Hitachi VT-S772A, also reviewed in this issue, and about equal to the average S-VHS deck. You can do better with four decks we've recently tested—JVC's HR-S6900, Panasonic's AG-1970 and PV-S4380, and RCA's VR720HF. All these decks have a lower list price than the SLV-R1000. The bottom line is, you give up a little picture quality for the convenience of LANC control, and that's a compromise many desktop video editors will be more than willing to make.

The audio is outstanding, among the best we've measured. The frequency response from 20 Hertz to 20 kilohertz varies by only +/-0.14 decibels, which is amazingly flat for analog tape.

We rate the SLV-R1000 very good overall. While its picture quality is decent and its audio quality is outstanding, the main thing that matters is the little blue LANC jack on the front. If you want a LANC-compatible S-VHS machine, the SLV-R1000 is the only game in town. ■

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27-INCH TV

continued from page 27

buttons on the remote let you swivel the set 15 degrees right or left without leaving your La-Z-Boy. A release on the pedestal lets you turn the set almost all the way around for easy access to the rear jack panel.

The set offers single-tuner picture-in-picture (you'll have to hook up a VCR if you want to watch two shows at once), with the usual positioning and swap controls. It comes with a universal remote that also operates two VCRs and a cable box. This remote is almost identical to those used on Mitsubishi's larger sets, and it's one of our favorites. The buttons are large, with many dedicated to a single purpose. Best of all, a button on the side lights up all the control legends.

Picture adjustments include video noise reduction on/off and adjustments for low/middle/high color temperature adjustment and average/accurate/flesh-tone color bias. For most of our viewing, we left the noise reduction off, the color temperature on low (6,800 Kelvin) and the color bias on accurate, and got a fabulous picture. Tweak if you must, but we say why fix it if it ain't broke?

The set has plenty of inputs and outputs, enough to suit almost any need. These include three S-video/video/ster-

Mitsubishi
CS-27701
27-Inch TV

Price: \$1,499

Weight & Size (h/w/d):
101 lbs., 23 x 28 1/8 x
19 inches

Screen Size: 27 inches
diagonally

Speaker Size: left and
right—3 x 5 inches,
woofer—4-inch round

Broadcast Tuning
Range: 2 to 13, 14 to 69

Cable Tuning Range:
125 channels

Jacks: front—S-video/
video/stereo audio in-
put; rear—2 S-video/
video/stereo audio in-
puts, S-video/video/
stereo audio output (se-
lected signal), video/
stereo audio output
(tuner), line-level sub-
woofer output, line-level
center-channel input,
A/V network, 2 RF in-
puts, external speaker
connectors

Audio S/N: 69.1 dB

Total Harmonic Distortion: 0.6%

RATINGS

Picture: very good/
excellent

Audio: good

Overall: very good/
excellent

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eo audio inputs (one up front), an S-video/video/stereo audio output that carries whatever signal is onscreen, and a video/stereo audio tuner output for connecting to an A/V receiver. Two RF outputs let you connect cable and an antenna, or use a splitter so you can watch a scrambled cable channel while recording another (or vice versa).

There's also a jack for A/V Network, which relays remote-control commands to concealed Mitsubishi components. A subwoofer jack provides a line-level, monophonic output for a powered subwoofer. A center-channel jack lets you feed in a line-level signal from the center channel output of a surround sound decoder, so you can use the TV's speakers as the center channel in a Dolby Pro-Logic system.

The Mitsubishi operating system is generally easy to use because many operations have dedicated buttons. However, those controls that are handled through the main menu system can be a pain to use, because there are so many levels with so much onscreen text that making an adjustment is like finding your way through a maze. To a certain extent, the manual is just as difficult to navigate, with many subjects explained by too

much overly simplified detail.

But none of this matters unless the picture is good. From a lab measurement standpoint, the set earns a very good to excellent rating, which is quite competitive. To find out how good it *really* is, we compared it to the two favorites from our "27-Inch Super Bowl" — Panasonic's CT-27XF40R and ProScan's PS2715. We set them up as in the comparison test, fed with composite signals by a Pioneer LD-S2 laserdisc player and a Niles Audio distribution amplifier, and calibrated using Reference Recording's *A Video Standard* laserdisc.

Test signals revealed that the CS-27701 beats the competition in two areas. First, a crosshatch pattern revealed that it has very low geometric distortion (although the other sets were nearly as good). Second, it has an almost perfect comb filter, which is used to separate the luminance (Y) and chrominance (C) signals.

The filter is so good that color bars showed no significant dot crawl at all — better even than the ProScan and Panasonic sets, both of which have great comb filters. We've only seen this level of comb-filter performance once before, on a Mitsubishi 35-inch set we tested

two years ago. With a comb filter this good, there's really no reason to use the S-video inputs, which are really only intended to prevent dot crawl.

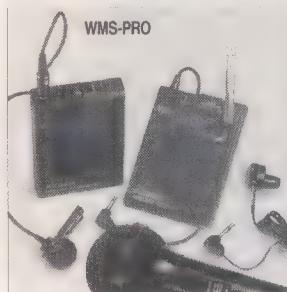
When it came to watching real pictures instead of test patterns, the CS-27701 again excelled. The Mitsubishi's colors don't look quite as accurate as those of the ProScan, and it doesn't have quite the color saturation or depth of the Panasonic, which can achieve an almost 3-D look with a good laserdisc. Instead, it strikes a balance with a more vivid picture than the ProScan, and more realistic color and contrast than the Panasonic. All things considered, choosing between these sets is a matter of opinion (and price). We wouldn't kick any of them out of the living room.

The audio is also pretty impressive. The measurements indicate only a good rating, but the speaker system delivers a fuller than usual frequency response from such a relatively small set. The sound is quite smooth, with natural-sounding voices and good bass.

The Mitsubishi CS-27701 is about as good as 27-inch sets get. If you're willing to pay for no-holds-barred performance, this set will deliver. ■

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HANDS-ON

continued from page 18

ing swinging camera movements every time I turned my head to look at a different subject. I snared shots of fellow cyclists, traffic whizzing by in the lefthand lane, passers-by who didn't realize I was taping them, and a pulse-pounding point of view as I zoomed down the steepest hill on my route. For variety, I grabbed shots of my hands shifting gears and my feet pedalling away—eventually, I'll cut all the footage down into a more interesting video.

With the assistance of Technical Editor Lancelot Braithwaite, we also looked at HeadTrip's specs. The built-in Video Walkman—a monaural, mid-line model—recorded a typical 8mm picture with about 250 lines of horizontal resolution at the SP speed, well below the camera's 400-line capability. Signal-to-noise ratios for the Walkman and the camera coincided with the good picture and performance levels we observed. The audio frequency response was 50 Hertz to 15 kiloHertz at SP, with 0.4 percent audio distortion—about average,

and wider than the range of the attached ambient-sound mic.

While I enjoyed my HeadTrip bike trip, bicycling's only the beginning. HeadTrip President Michael Friedland suggests using it for hiking, mountain biking, snowmobiling, car racing, hang gliding and skydiving. Given its convenience, the only limitation would seem to be its wearer's imagination. ■

HOME THEATER

continued from page 20

page and a number. I can upload and download macros in seconds [to perform automated operations involving several components]. The only problem with the CORE is that it has so much memory and so many key locations, a person can become frustrated trying to remember where everything is. The key is to program it so everything is in a logical location—for example, on each VCR page, you put the play button in the same place."

The computer system not only lets Levy timeshift to his heart's content, it makes the A/V system much easier to use. "I don't want to fiddle around with components every time I use them. Ease of use is very important to me, but I get around that with the CORE. Even if the components themselves are not easy to operate, the CORE overcomes that," he says. (The CORE is now marketed by Celedon as the PIC-100; you can contact Celedon at 415-252-7199.)

The system has been working well for Levy—he's recorded over 2,500 movies in the last five years, and has accumulated a collection of 320 movies he hasn't watched yet. "I've got a two-year backlog of movies which I'll start reducing during the summer rerun season," he says. "We don't watch anything live." For Levy—and millions of other VCR enthusiasts—that's what video is all about. ■

TECH TIP

Dark by design

One of the best ways to adjust speaker placement and surround sound decoders is with the sensory deprivation method. Turn off your TV set and all the room's lights, and listen in the dark. This deprives us of our sight and sound and enhances our hearing. Give your senses time to adjust, and you'll be amazed at how well localized sounds stand out.

George Siroki
 Margate, Florida

**We made a projection TV for people who say
they need their space.**



Introducing the world's first 52" projection TV with built-in storage. It holds your cable box, four components and up to thirty tapes. So instead of a pile of components that rivals Mount Everest, you can fit everything inside one elegant cabinet. So all you'll see on your TV is a clear, brilliant picture. And all you'll see on your floor is a rug. **Changing Entertainment. Again.TM** **RCA**

Desktop video is kicking up a fuss. It's changing the way TV shows and movies are being made and edited. It will soon have a similar effect on how you deal with your own videos, but is desktop video technology really ready for you? Just as important, are you ready for it?

In case you're not clear on what all the fuss is about, desktop video (or DTV) uses personal computers to perform video post-production tasks, from straight cuts-only editing to powerful image manipulation effects like those seen in *Terminator 2* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. With DTV, your home computer can do everything a professional editing suite can, along with computerized animation and a new technology called nonlinear editing, which allows you to store video on your computer hard drive and juggle scenes digitally, without having to assemble them onto videotape in order from start to finish.

Sounds impressive, doesn't it? It looks even more impressive, as anyone who's watched *seaQuest DSV* or the *Babylon 5* pilot will attest (both shows use NewTek's *LightWave 3D* animation software for the Video Toaster and the Commodore Amiga). All the power of Industrial Light and Magic, right on your own home computer!

However, there are a few things you should consider before you decide to take on Lucas and Spielberg *mano a mano*. First, while desktop video makes professional video post-production a lot cheaper than it used to be, it's still fairly expensive. Second, not

all of today's DTV systems will run on a lot of older, slower personal computers. Third, not all of them may be compatible with the VCRs you have. Finally, there's a lot of inexpensive professional or near-

In this article, we'll examine the pros and cons of desktop video systems, then explain the traditional alternatives to desktop video. Finally, we'll help you figure out which DTV equipment best suits your needs and budget. (If you're not up to speed on the basics of desktop video, check out "The ABCs of Desktop Editing" in last month's issue.)

DESKTOP DILEMMA

*Is computer editing ready for you?
Are you ready for it?*



Tops In Desktop: The control screen for NewTek's Video Toaster.

professional editing and video effects equipment that doesn't require a computer. Before you take the plunge, ask yourself, "Do I really need DTV?"

system like Fast Electronic's Video Machine.

But let's say you don't need to animate or do fancy effects. All you want

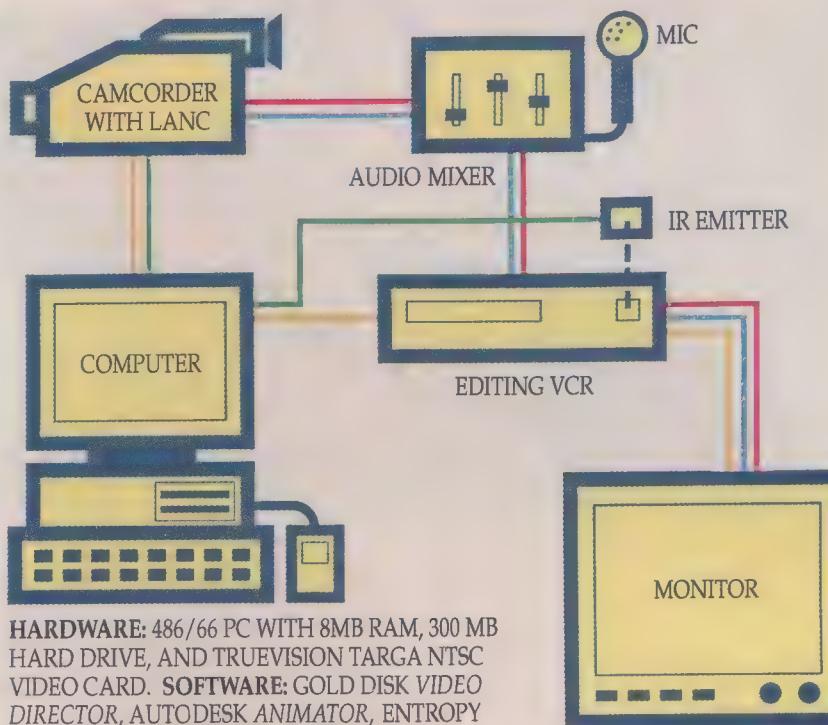
DESKTOP DIFFICULTIES

It's difficult to buy a turnkey desktop video system because the computer industry is still chiefly oriented to applications like desktop publishing and accounting. Most computers bought off the rack now generally come with a VGA or Super VGA monitor and monitor card, 2 to 4 megabytes of RAM, and an 80- or 127-Mb hard drive.

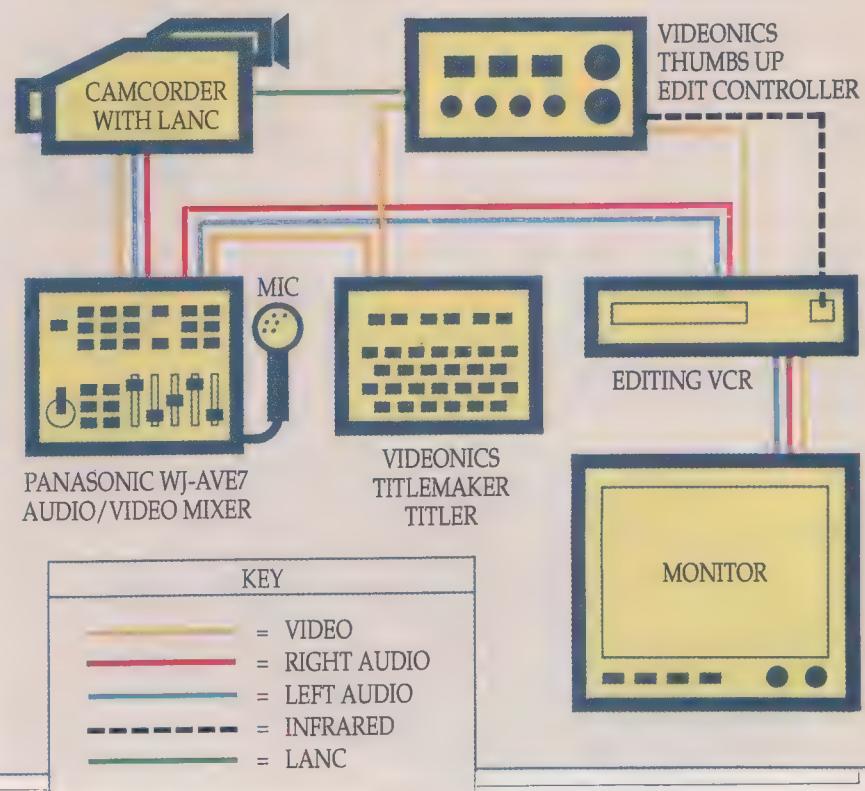
If you buy one of the new multimedia systems, you'll also get a sound card and a CD-ROM drive, and maybe a slightly larger hard drive.

You probably won't get an NTSC video graphics card like the \$1,299 Targa 16/32 from Truevision, which you'll need to blend computer graphics and titles with NTSC video, and to run better character generation, animation and image manipulation software. This you'll have to purchase separately, along with any extra RAM or hard disk space you may need. You will need extra RAM, too, especially if you intend to use a fully-integrated computer postproduction

DESKTOP EDITING SYSTEM



NON-DESKTOP EDITING SYSTEM



are titles that aren't blocky or jagged, and maybe an occasional graphic off your computer. If this is the case, you're in luck because all you'll have to purchase is the necessary software, cabling and a \$400-plus device called a genlock that lays a VGA signal (what comes out of your computer) on top of an NTSC signal (what your videotape uses). If you want to save a few bucks and can live with titles that aren't going to appear over live video, you could get away with an encoder like Advanced Digital Systems' \$199 GameBlaster, which is used for translating computer games to your television set.

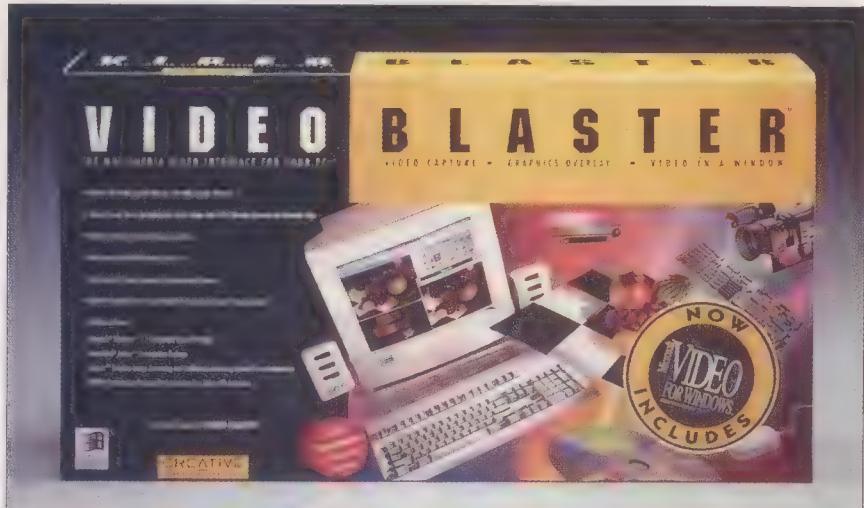
While you're at it, make certain your VCRs' editing protocols are supported by the DTV edit controller system you want to purchase. For example, I have an RCA CC360 VHS camcorder with primitive synchro edit that I use to play tapes, and a Panasonic AG-1960 S-VHS VCR I use for recording. To use any of the desktop video editors now available, I'd need to purchase a camcorder or a VCR that accepts one of the several protocols used by computer-based edit controllers: Panasonic five-pin, LANC (found on Sony and Canon camcorders), VISCA (found on Sony's Vdeck VCRs), RC time code (found on Sony's Vdecks and CCD-VX3 camcorder, and on Canon's L2 camcorder), or RS-232 or -422 computer port protocols (found on many pro VCRs).

CRACKING THE HOOD

Most DTV systems aren't exactly plug and play. With the exception of Gold Disk's Video Director and some of the inexpensive character generator packages like Entropy Engineering's Video Titler Lite, you can't just stick a cable into the right port, load the software and start working. Most of the systems that can do special effects, frame-accurate cuts or A/B roll editing (where you're running two source VCRs together for dissolves and wipes) come with computer input/output (I/O) cards that need to be installed inside your computer. This means cracking the hood.

Three types of people tend to find themselves in this situation. Those in the first group have never taken the top off of their machines, and wouldn't consider doing so under the threat of tor-

DESKTOP



Play A Card: Creative Labs' Video Blaster captures video and stores it in *Video for Windows* files.

ture. The second type hangs out at computer parts stores, and are forever installing just one more component. Those in the third group, to which I belong, fall somewhere in between — I've opened my computer to put cards in, but I can't always get the cards to work.

I/O cards can't simply be dropped into any available slot because most use serial (or COM) ports to communicate with your external equipment. A computer's mouse, for example, often uses the COM1 port, which is generally the default factory setting. Since two peripherals can't be on the same port, your computer gets confused and either refuses to recognize the new card, refuses to recognize both COM1-set cards, or at worst refuses to work at all.

Although some of these conflicts can be diagnosed and rectified through the new card's driver software — which tells the card what it's supposed to do — you often have to reconfigure the card yourself. This requires not only that you know what ports your peripherals are already using, but that the instructions for configuring the card clearly state what needs to be changed — which isn't always the case. Provided you know what you need to do, you can then reconfigure the card by moving around the jumpers, which are extremely tiny plastic plugs that have a nasty tendency to get lost when you pull them off the card.

NON-DTV ALTERNATIVES

I don't want to encourage technophobia or imply that you can't learn to install your own computer hardware without becoming a propellerhead — but you may not always have the hours or even days

you may need to root around inside your computer to figure out why your expensive new editing or special effects card isn't working. In this case, you may want to consider traditional, non-computer editing alternatives.

Although non-DTV editors, character generators and video mixers are limited compared to their computer equivalents, they're often less expensive and perfectly capable of handling most prosumer postproduction needs. Even better, all you generally need to use

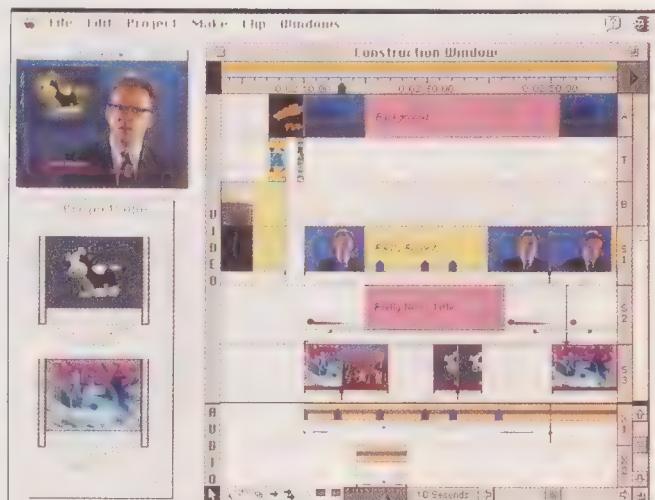
work only with Panasonic or Sony and Canon products, these controllers permit you to edit with decks from different companies and in different tape formats. Depending on whether the VCRs you use accept one of the prosumer edit protocols or simply work by infrared remote, the accuracy of your cuts will range from two to 30 frames.

By contrast, most computer-driven edit controllers begin at around \$1,000, with prices for A/B roll capability in the \$4,000-plus range. Systems like Future-Video's V-Station Editor and Videomedia's Oz Win-1-CX, while frame-accurate or nearly so, also require that all your edit decks utilize some type of edit protocol, like Sony's VISCA or Panasonic five-pin. Gold Disk's \$199 Video Director, available for Windows and the Amiga, is the exception — it works much like a stand-alone edit controller, and has about the same level of accuracy.

• **Character Generators (CGs):** With one notable exception, computers have the upper hand in this field. Stand-alone CGs like JVC's \$279 JXT88, Ambico's \$199 Video Titlewriter and Sima's \$149 Screenwriter don't have a lot of flex-

Editor's Dream:

Adobe's Premiere lets you cut and paste digitized video segments, adding scene transitions, sound effects and graphics at any point in a video without extra equipment.



them is a couple of editing decks and the equipment itself. Here's how this equipment breaks down.

• **Edit Controllers:** If you don't need frame-accurate cuts or A/B roll editing, stand-alone edit controllers like Future-Video's \$595 EC-1000 and Videonics' \$229 Thumbs Up may be viable options. Unlike some proprietary editors that

ability when it comes to typefaces, sizes, colors and title effects. Videonics' \$499 TitleMaker, on the other hand, turns out professional-looking titles with several different typefaces and effects, and can effectively compete with prosumer DTV systems.

Although Entropy Engineering's Video Titler Lite for Windows is a bargain at



Best In Its Class:
Videonics' \$499 Title-Maker, the king of affordable character generators.

\$95, using your computer's TrueType library of typefaces to generate titles, most other computer CG software, like Sheref Systems's Deputy CG or MainFrame Computer Graphics' Inscripter, cost around \$395 and up. As noted above, many of these systems require specific video graphics cards like the Targa 16 or Matrox's Illuminator Pro—and all require some form of genlock or encoder to get a recordable NTSC signal out to your videotape.

• **Video Mixers:** Since 1989, when both NewTek and Panasonic introduced their original postproduction video mixing systems, the gap between DTV and non-DTV has narrowed considerably in both price and performance. NewTek's original Video Toaster for the Commodore Amiga was nearly as good as a professional video editing suite's switcher, but required an initial outlay of from \$5,000 to \$10,000—a considerable drop from what professional switchers cost, but still more than most video hobbyists could afford.

For video hobbyists, Panasonic's \$1,800 WJ-AVE5, introduced at about the same time as the Toaster, provides a more practical way to do video mixing. It lets you do dissolves and almost 100 different wipes, as well as audio mixing and basic titling. The new WJ-AVE7 adds dual picture-in-picture, auto take (which performs scene transitions in 0.5 to 8 seconds), luminance keying of one video image over another, a negative effect and synchronized audio mixing.

Over the past year or so, video mixing has blossomed into a wide range of desktop and non-desktop products. DTV products like Matrox's Studio for Windows (\$9,995) and Fast Electronic's Video Machine for both Windows (\$3,995) and the Macintosh (\$4,995) have found themselves competing with stand-alone video mixers like Panasonic's \$3,500 WJ-MX30 and Videonics' just-released \$1,295 MX-1. All four systems come with built-in timebase corrector/frame buffers, a full range of special effects, and some form of keying capability (that's what they use to get a computer-generated weather map behind the weatherman).

While both the Studio and the Video Machine also offer built-in edit controllers, which the two stand-alone

mixers do not, they also require powerful 486 PC or Apple Macintosh Quadra computers with a minimum of 8Mb of RAM to work effectively.

I WANT MY DTV

Although it is more expensive and complicated to set up and learn than a lot of non-computer postproduction equipment, there are instances when only desktop video will do. If you plan to make a tape that requires precisely timed video effects, or even one in which you mix three or more different audio tracks with tight synchronization, you might find the inexact, time-consuming nature of non-DTV postproduction frustrating and counterproductive. While I love Panasonic's WJ-AVE5 mixer for its ease of use, A/B digital effects capability and low cost, I don't recommend it if you have to do big post-production jobs in a hurry.

If you're a video animator, DTV is a necessity, not just a convenience. There are no camcorders available that can shoot one or even two frames at a time. The best the animation feature on some higher-end models can do is one second (that's 30 frames, folks) per shot. Outside of renting time at (or owning) an editing suite with broadcast-quality VCRs and editors, the only way to get the precision needed for smooth animation is through 2D animation programs like Autodesk Animator. If you need to do 3D animation or image manipulation (like the effects on *seaQuest DSV*), you'll need a program like Autodesk's 3D Stu-

dio (\$2,995) or Presidio Software's modestly priced but limited 3D Workshop (\$299).

If your videos generally require nothing more than cuts with half-second accuracy, simple music-under audio mixing, an occasional dissolve or wipe, and decent-looking titles, you'd probably be well-served with a Videonics Thumbs Up edit controller, a Panasonic WJ-AVE5 video mixer and a Videonics TitleMaker, for a total street price of under \$2,000.

However, if your postproduction requirements are more intensive, requiring frequent A/B-roll effects, a variety of title typefaces and graphics, and editing that's accurate to within a few frames, and you own a 486/33 or faster computer, then a desktop studio package like Fast Electronic's Video Machine is probably worth the extra investment.

If you've got the money and the computer power, you now have several choices if you want to get into desktop video—the field is still in its infancy, but it offers many viable products. If you're on a tighter budget, that's okay—conventional editing gear is better and cheaper than ever. So should you go desktop? Unfortunately, there's no final, absolute, one-size-fits-all answer to that question. Ultimately, you can only get your answer through careful consideration of your needs and budget. ■



Worthy Successor?
Panasonic's WJ-AVE7, the new version of the WJ-AVE5 mixer.

COMPACT COMEBACK

*A Buying Guide to VHS-C
and SVHS-C Camcorders*



Straight Shooters:
RCA's CC190 has an
image stabilizer, while
Quasar's VM538 fea-
tures a digital zoom.

A few years ago VHS-C seemed the camcorder format least likely to succeed. Consumers, retailers, even some manufacturers were giving it a vote of no confidence. VHS-C sales had plummeted to just 11 percent of the business, while 8mm was grabbing a quarter of the market and growing at a healthy clip.

Cracking their once invincible pledges of format loyalty, several makers of VHS camcorders and VCRs decided they had, ahem, prior engagements elsewhere. Major players like Sharp and RCA started to downplay C and romance 8mm. Today, you can no longer find VHS-C camcorders from former supporters Emerson, Hitachi, Tandy, Memorex and Mitsubishi, which is totally out of the camcorder business here.

But the compact format declined to fold. It has not only been reborn, but sent to finishing school. Today, this Pygmalion's favorite line is "Will its tapes play in my VCR?" The question, raised extensively in Panasonic advertising, has helped to "stop 8mm in its tracks" and drive VHS-C sales up to "almost 35 percent" of the camcorder market, according to Stan Hametz, general manager of Panasonic's VHS division.

The resurgence is not just a result of shrewd advertising. Makers of VHS-C and S-VHS-C camcorders have made a concerted effort to improve their machines' performance and feature packages. A look at the accompanying chart shows that shutter speeds are faster, zooms are longer and digital features are ubiquitous. Flying erase heads are virtually standard (as they have always been among 8mm camcorders).

Fill lights have also become popular, and are pushed much harder in the C-camp. They're either built into the body of the camcorder, as in models by JVC, Minolta and RCA, or hot-shoed to the side or top, as in models by Magnavox, Panasonic and Quasar. A desirable battery "refresh" feature has become de rigueur in VHS-C chargers.

CCD imager sensitivity has also improved tremendously, leading some manufacturers to boast that videos can be shot in as little as 1 lux of light. But, industry-wide standards for minimum lux measurements have yet to be fixed, making claims about low-lux performance a sticky wicket. ▶

BUYING GUIDE

•BRAND	•MODEL	•PRICE	•ZOOM/DIGITAL ZOOM	•COLOR VIEWFINDER (Pixels)	•TOP SHUTTER SPEED	•AUTO EXPOSURE MODES	•STABILIZER	•HI-FI STEREO	•CINEMA MODE	•LIGHT (Watts)	•REMOTE CONTROL	•SPECIAL FEATURES
VHS-C CAMCORDERS												
GE	G501	\$699	6x	N	1/4,000	0	N	N	N	N	N	HC, AR, DTR
JVC	GR-AX25U	\$900	10x	N	1/8,000	6	N	N	LB	N	N	A, HC, AR, AVD Opt, DTR
JVC	GR-AX35U	\$1,000	10x	N	1/8,000	6	N	N	LB	N	MultiB	A, HC, AR, AVD Opt, DTR
JVC	GR-AX55U	\$1,100	10x	N	1/8,000	6	N	N	LB	Y(3w)	MultiB	A, HC, AR, AVD Opt, DTR, RAE
JVC	GR-AX75U	\$1,300	10x/20x	N	1/8,000	8	Y	N	LB	Y(3w)	MultiB	A, HC, AR, AVD Opt, DTR, RAE
JVC	GR-M7PRO	\$1,300	11x	N	1/4,000	1	N	N	LB	Y(5w)	Cam	A, HC, AR, AVD, DTR, DSS, DMW, MFL, RAE, TA
MAGNAVOX	CVR610	\$750	10x	N	1/10,000	0	N	N	N	Opt	N	AVD, DTR
MAGNAVOX	CVR620	\$850	10x	N	1/10,000	0	N	N	N	Y(5w)	Cam/VCR	AVD, DTR, DF
MAGNAVOX	CVR630	\$1,100	10x	N	1/10,000	0	Y	N	N	Y(5w)	Cam/VCR	AVD, DTR, DF, DSS
MINOLTA	C-550	\$800	10x	N	1/8,000	6	N	N	LB	N	MultiB	A, HC, AVD Opt, AR, DTR, RAE, VISS Opt
MINOLTA	C-560	\$1,095	10x	N	1/8,000	6	N	N	LB	Y(3w)	MultiB	A, HC, AVD Opt, AR, DTR, RAE, VISS Opt
MINOLTA	C-570	NA	10x/20x	N	1/8,000	8	Y	N	LB	Y(3w)	MultiB	A, HC, AVD, AR, DTR, RAE, VISS, TL
PANASONIC	PV-IQ204	\$800	10x	N	1/10,000	0	N	N	N	N	N	DTR, SLC, VH
PANASONIC	PV-IQ304	\$900	12x	N	1/10,000	0	N	N	N	Opt	Cam	DTR, SLC, VH
PANASONIC	PV-IQ404	\$1,000	12x	Y(120k)	1/10,000	0	N	N	N	Y(5w)	Cam	DTR, SLC, VH, 2HR
PANASONIC	PV-IQ504	\$1,100	12x/20x	N	1/10,000	0	Y	N	16:9	Opt	Cam	DTR, SLC, VH, 2HR, DSS, VISS
PANASONIC	PV-IQ604	\$1,300	12x/20x	Y(120k)	1/10,000	0	Y	N	16:9	Y(5w)	Cam	DTR, SLC, VH, 2HR, DSS, VISS
PANASONIC	PV-54	\$1,499	12x/20x	Y(180k)	1/10,000	0	Y	Y	16:9	Y(5w)	Cam	HC, AR, AVD, DTR, 410K, MFL, RAE
PHILIPS	PVR830AV	\$900	10x	N	1/10,000	0	N	N	N	Y(5w)	Cam/VCR	AVD, DTR, SLC, VH
PHILIPS	PVR850AV	\$1,000	10x	N	1/10,000	0	N	Y	N	Y(5w)	CamVCR	AVD, DTR, SLC, VH
PROSCAN	PSC15C	\$1,399	10x/20x	N	1/8,000	6	Y	N	N	Y	MultiB	HC, AR, DTR, RAE
QUASAR	VM530	\$949	10x	N	1/10,000	0	N	N	N	Opt	Cam	DTR, SLC, VH
QUASAR	VM535	\$1,099	10x	N	1/10,000	0	N	Y	N	Y(5w)	Cam	DTR, SLC, VH, 2HR
QUASAR	VM525	\$1,249	10x/80x	N	1/4,000	0	N	N	N	Y(5w)	N	DTR, SLC, VH, AVD, DSS(M), VISS, 2HR
QUASAR	VM538	\$1,399	10x/100x	Y(96k)	1/10,000	0	Y	N	16:9	Y(5w)	Cam	DTR, VH, SLC, DSS, DF, DMW, 2HR
QUASAR	VM539	\$1,399	10x/100x	Y(96k)	1/10,000	0	Y	N	16:9	Y(5w)	Cam	DTR, VH, SLC, DSS, DF, DMW, 2HR
RCA	CC174	\$799	10x	N	1/8,000	6	N	N	LB	N	N	AR, DTR, HC
RCA	CC178	\$899	10x	N	1/8,000	6	N	N	LB	N	MultiB	AR, DTR, HC
RCA	CC188	\$999	10x	N	1/8,000	6	N	N	LB	Y(3w)	MultiB	AR, DTR, HC, RAE
RCA	CC190	\$1,299	10x/20x	N	1/8,000	6	Y	N	LB	Y(3w)	MultiB	AR, DTR, HC, RAE
S-VHS-C CAMCORDERS												
JVC	GR-SZ1U	\$1,999	11x/22x	Y(70k)	1/2,000	11	Y	Y	16:9	N	MultiB	HC, AR, AVD, DTR, 410K, MFL, RAE
PANASONIC	PV-S64	\$1,699	12x/20x	Y(180k)	1/10,000	0	Y	Y	16:9	Y(5w)	Cam	AVD, DA, DMW, DTR, SLC, 2HR, VH, VISS
PANASONIC	AG-3	\$3,300	12x/30x	Y(96k)	1/8,000	0	Y	Y	16:9	N	N	DMW, DNR, DSS, DTB, DTR, 3CCD

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

Y: yes, feature present; **N:** no, feature absent; **NA:** not available; **Opt:** optional. **CINEMA MODE.** LB: letterbox-cropped widescreen effect; **16:9:** digitally compressed widescreen picture. **REMOTE.** Cam: camcorder only; Cam/VCR: also controls same brand VCR; MultiB: also controls more than 11 dozen popular brands of VCR. **SPECIAL FEATURES.** A: animation; AD: audio dub; AVD: audio and video dub; **AVD opt:** audio and video dub with optional remote; HC: head cleaner; AR: age recording; DA: dynamorphous laminated metal recording heads; DF: digital fade; DMW: digital mix/wipe; DNR: digital noise reduction; DSS(M): digital still/strobe (mirror); DTB: digital time-base correction; DTR: date/time recording; **410K:** 410,000-pixel CCD; SLC: sliding lens cap, built in; MFL: multi-functional lens (ultra-wide to microscope modes); RAE: random assemble editing; **3CCD:** 3-chip image sensor; T: titler; TA: title animation; TL: time lapse; **2HR:** 2-hour battery; VH: VCR-size (62mm) head drum; **VISS:** Video Index Search System; **VISS opt:** Video Index search system with optional remote



Mighty Minis:
JVC's line-topping
GR-SZ1U and
Magnavox's CVR630.

COMEBACK

Despite the demands of a larger tape cassette, and the use in some models of a VHS-sized head drum for better stability, VHS-C and S-VHS-C camcorders have been trimmed close to the proportions of 8mm models, weighing in general just a few ounces more. Most are around two pounds, plus battery.

Electronic image stabilization, which first appeared on pricey C models, is now widespread, driving shaky handed customers into stores in hot pursuit.

Zoom lenses have picked up speed and reach, growing from 6x to 8x and 10x levels, often accompanied by digital modes that can decently double the range. Lately, VHS-C marketers have moved to exploit their lens' power advantages. JVC and Panasonic regularly advertise their 10x zoom models at the same prices or even a bit below comparable 8mm models with 8x lenses.

To counter 8mm's longer two-hour playing time, compact T-30 tapes, which record 90 minutes at the SLP speed (or 30 at SP) are now plentiful, and a few camcorder models have appeared with a tape tension switch optimized for T-20, T-30 and a still unseen T-40 tape. The ultra-thin two-hour T-40 tape (at SLP speed) has languished in the Maxell and Fuji labs, still too slippery to tame. But camcorder makers say its absence is not a handicap. "Long play is not really a concern with VHS-C buyers, as it is for 8mm customers," asserts Ron Schrag, camcorder product development manager for Thomson's RCA, ProScan and

General Electric brands.

Nor, evidently, are hi-fi stereo sound and the higher video resolution of S-VHS-C. "Hi-fi is not even among the most desirable features cited by our buyers," says Hametz, noting that most people play personal tapes through their TV speaker and so can't hear any difference. Most consumers, adds Schrag, don't feel hi-fi stereo is worth "the extra \$100" it costs to add the circuitry and an extra pair of recording heads. "They only want to pay a \$20 to \$30 price premium." RCA has no hi-fi stereo models in its line, though one may appear by year's end.

Consumers resist the Super format even more. S-VHS-C "has some clear advantages," argues Mark Wayne, a product information manager for Minolta, which fields both VHS-C and 8mm camcorders. "Dust becomes more noticeable in 8mm videos than in larger tape formats. So do tape dropouts." Still, Minolta has given up on S-VHS-C for the present. Why? Less than two percent of all C-format buyers opt for S-VHS-C, while 10 percent of 8mm fans ask for Hi8.

Color viewfinders are expected to become a hotter feature in C-format camcorders this year. Companies have improved their quality and reduced the manufacturing cost, making it practical for more models. For example, Panasonic will offer two VHS-C entries, the PV-IQ404 and the PV-IQ604, with color viewfinders that promise 20 percent

higher resolution thanks to a 120,000-pixel LCD imager. And two Panasonic top-liners, the VHS-C PV-54 and the S-VHS-C PV-S64, will carry color viewfinders with 180,000 pixels, more than doubling the LCD resolution in JVC's acclaimed GR-SZ1U. Some camcorders coming from RCA and ProScan later this year will also feature higher-resolution LCD viewfinders, as well as the 12x zoom lens now found in new Panasonics.

Another improvement we'll see spreading from the likes of RCA, Quasar and JVC is digital picture compression. This so-called squeeze mode is for recording a true 16:9 widescreen picture within the confines of a 4:3 recording medium. For proper viewing, tapes made this way must be played on one of the new generation of image-stretching 16:9 TV sets. The effect is far more sophisticated than the "letterbox" or "cinema" modes on some current camcorders. These merely mask part of the picture at the top and the bottom to give you that movie screen look.

One model not headed our way, despite plenty of rumors, is a stripped-down VHS-C camcorder at a "magic" \$399 or \$499 price. Panasonic's Japanese-only version of this creature, called Patoru, has an optical viewfinder, a two-step lens and no playback capability. But it has not been much of a success. "In the mid-'80s we had a similar concept piece, the PV-50, and didn't sell many of that one either," says Hametz. "People want a power zoom, and an electronic viewfinder so they can play back what they're recording. And the truth is, at this time, it's just not possible to build a camcorder at this price." (In Japan, camcorders sell closer to their list prices, so that even at \$700 the Patoru looks like a bargain.)

What about large LCD viewing screens, like those popularized by the Sharp ViewCams and the Handycam Snap? Will they turn up in C-form soon? The answer is a qualified yes. No one is denying reports that camcorder makers will soon integrate LCD view screens into VHS-C designs. They may appear before the end of the year, but should definitely debut by 1995. "It's created a new category in camcorders," says Schrag. "This is a product that's here to stay."



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Circle 18 on Reader Service Card.



AUDIO YOU CAN FEEL

How powered subwoofers bring big bass sound to home theaters

There are reasons why we blink when we peer into the center of the sun, why we flinch at the sound of a predator's cry, why we salivate at the smell of raw bison meat dripping fresh blood on the cave floor. And there is a reason why no home theater audio purchase is as viscerally satisfying, as hands-down *fun* as an honest-to-Allah butt-kickin' powered subwoofer!

Any Way You Want It:
NHT's SW2 subwoofer comes in powered (left) and unpowered (right) versions. The powered version is shown with its dedicated amplifier/crossover.



We are *humans*, you and I. We instinctively take in sensory input in every part of our body, the sacred and the profane. Show us words and our eyes do read them. Make a noise and our ears do hear it. But play us that slammin' scene in *T2* where Ah-nult chases that runaway semi while they crunch, crash and otherwise make BIG NOISE all over L.A., and we take that sound in all over our bodies, feeling it bruise our kidneys and massage our butts like a big monstrous wave of power that shakes the room and adds undeniable realism to the manic action up on the screen. That's BIG BASS FUN, dear reader, and I'm here to tell you how to get some for your very own.

"But wait!" I hear some of you more sensitive, Birkenstock-wearing types cry. "I don't go in for stupid proto-adolescent action flix like *T2*. Why do I need to shell out the green for a butt-kickin' powered subwoofer? I just wanna watch *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and lose myself in Daniel Day's limpid pools of eggshell blue."

Well, you're wrong, Nils—you need a butt-kickin' powered subwoofer as bad as any of the rest of us. Maybe more so. Because a subwoofer isn't just for truck-crashin' action flix, but any movie with a beautiful, soaring soundtrack—a good subwoofer underpins the flow of the music, filling up the room and sweeping you away with the power and majesty of the music, and that goes for *Glory* just as well as *Guns N' Roses*. Handling the audible (and feelable) bass range from 20 to 100 Hertz, a good subwoofer breaks down the last barrier to getting theater-quality sound into your home.

BEWARE OF WANNA-BE WOOFAZ

Before we get into some cool subs on the market and how to add them to your system, let's narrow the field a bit by tossing out those wanna-be woofaz that have no business claiming to be He-Man subwoofers. Included in this sorry group are those \$149.95 specials in countless mail-order catalogs that promise "Room-Quaking Bass Destruction U-Betcha!" with cartoons of lightning bolts shooting out of subwoofers and poor little weiner dogs running out of the room with their tails between their



Shake It Up: Velodyne, one of the best-known subwoofer manufacturers, offers an extensive line. At top is the new remote-controlled F1500R, and at bottom (left to right) are the ULD-18, ULD-15 and ULD-12.

legs as the master of the house kicks back in his La-Z-Boy with a beatific smile on his face.

That guy in the La-Z-Boy isn't a satisfied customer—he's the owner of the catalog firm, and he's smiling because of all the saps who think you can duplicate thousands of dollars worth of theater subwoofers with a \$149.95 closeout piece o' junk. Don't join their ranks. There is simply no getting around the need for quality speaker drivers and well-braced cabinets (not to mention quality crossovers and amplifiers) when you want to reproduce the bottom octaves of the bass range with accuracy

and low distortion. Believe me, you *cannot* do this for 150 clams, no matter what college you went to. Like everything else in life, cheap subwoofers sound cheap, and are usually more annoying than a rock in your shoe. They make movie dialog hard to understand, and when low bass sounds come up, cheap subwoofers give you audio with more distortion than real lows.

Other pseudo-subs to avoid like the plague are anything smaller than a shoebox and made of plastic, with fancy pseudo-scientific names like "Bandpass Mojo"—this is virgin sap territory, so just say *hell no!*

POWERED VS. PASSIVE

We need to make a distinction between passive and powered subwoofers. A powered (or active) subwoofer—which is the coolest kind by far—is made up of three parts:

1. The woofer box itself.
2. A crossover circuit that divides the audio signal into bass and everything else, and sends these signals to their appropriate destinations.
3. A dedicated power amplifier to drive the subwoofer to gloriously gargantuan levels while relieving your main amplifier of the strain of reproducing deep bass.

Often, a powered subwoofer packs all three into one cabinet. Other powered subs on the market house the crossover and amplifier in a separate receiver-sized chassis, which can either be located right atop the sub or, over with the rest of your home theater components, linked to the woofer cabinet with a length of heavy-gauge speaker cable.

A passive subwoofer is just a woofer in a box, without the crossover and amplifier. This is a legitimate way to go if you already have a high-powered (100 watts minimum into 8 ohms) amp you can use to drive the subwoofer, but it means that your surround receiver or



Bass Blender: Mirage's PS-12-180 offers line- and speaker-level inputs, phase switching and a continuously variable crossover for precise matching to existing speaker systems. It has an integral 180-watt amp.

output to your subwoofer amplifier, hook the amp up to the woofer with some heavy speaker cable (use 10- or 12-gauge) and you're in like Flintstone. (Make sure the unit has a crossover built in—many receivers just have a full-frequency mono output for a subwoofer that has to be used with a separate crossover.)

A passive subwoofer can be a viable way to go if you're already familiar enough with mixing'n'matching subs, crossovers and amps to get good results. But for the rest of us, an active subwoofer is the easiest way to achieve great results with a minimum of hassle.

PLACEMENT

You know how every grain of truth spawns a mountain of misinformation? One of those grains of truth is that low bass sounds are *omnidirectional*, which means that they don't shoot straight out like a flashlight

beam, but rather spread evenly in every direction. This has led some waterheads to suggest that you can locate a subwoofer anywhere in the room, even be-

hind a couch or over in the closet, and it won't make any difference to the sound. Wives of home theater nuts love to hear some acne-scarred salesman repeat this pitch, as it holds great promise for getting that humongous @#\$%# hunk of #%@\$ out of the living room and out of sight.

Well, it just ain't so, I'm a'feared. While low bass is omnidirectional, a subwoofer's response does overlap some with the main speakers—if you locate the subwoofer too far away from your front three speakers, this can create an audibly distracting effect because the low bass from the subwoofer no longer seems associated with the rest of the spectrum reproduced by the main speakers. Your ears will only blend the sound of the subwoofer with your main speakers if it is near to them, so the best placement is usually no more than around five feet from the main speakers, and preferably as centrally located between the left and right speakers as possible.

Behind your monitor with the woofers firing to the side of the room is a popular placement that sounds great and also keeps the subwoofer fairly out of sight. Out of sight! Really, room placement is the single most important factor that can make or break the sound of a subwoofer. No other kind of speaker is as sensitive to where it's placed in the room. Two good rules of thumb for sub placement are:

1. *The closer to a wall, the more bass—*



Slender Sub: JBL's PS100 is one of a line of front-firing, powered subwoofers that use tall, thin cabinets to help them look relatively inconspicuous.

processor must have a line-level subwoofer output with a built-in crossover. If it does, all you have to do is run a line-level interconnect from the subwoofer

beam, but rather spread evenly in every direction. This has led some waterheads to suggest that you can locate a subwoofer anywhere in the room, even be-

As virtually every speaker manufacturer rushes to deliver "home theater" speakers to the marketplace, M&K amasses nearly twenty years of experience in the field—dating back to Hollywood screening room installations in the 1970s.

M&K engineers have spent well over a decade studying the varied aspects of surround

sound—including encoding and decoding, soundtrack recording and the differences between reproducing sound in theaters and in homes.

M&K speakers excel in the reproduction of all source material. Accuracy, low coloration, pinpoint imaging, wide dynamic range, and deep-bass reproduction are all critical for music as well as film soundtracks. M&K Satellites and Subwoofers have been acclaimed for these attributes since the '70s.

And this is why M&K knows that any speaker that claims to be optimized for either music or film sound, one at the expense of the other, will never reproduce either one properly.

M&K Home Theater Systems

Conventional speakers make the music and effects on film soundtracks compressed and dull. But M&K's exciting dynamics and quick transients give you precise 3-D imaging and a lifelike presence.

M&K Satellites are *timbre matched*, using virtually identical speaker drivers, crossovers, and frequency response, for a seamless 360° surround-sound performance. With an all-M&K home theater system, voices and effects do not change char-

acter when their sound moves from left to right or front to back in your room.

Even if you are just adding an M&K subwoofer, front/center, or surround

M&K COMPONENT SPEAKERS FOR THE HOME THEATER

speaker to your present system, M&K's unique timbre controls allow you to "fine-tune" the sound of your new M&K speakers to achieve the closest possi-

ble timbre match with your existing speakers—even if they are not M&Ks.

M&K Center Channel Speakers

Beware of inexpensive "center channel" speakers. In Pro-Logic, the center channel speaker is driven the hardest, and often reproduces as much sound as the left and right speakers combined.

Each one of M&K's six individually-available Satellites has exceptional dynamic range and high output to meet and exceed the tremendous demands of the center channel.

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Legendary for their massive output, exceptional detail, and articulation, M&K's thirteen internally-powered Subwoofers set the industry's standards for high-performance deep bass.

M&K's innovative Push-Pull Dual Driver subwoofers deliver a major improvement by virtually eliminating even-order harmonic distortion, and doubling efficiency (same as doubling amplifier power) with four times the output of single driver subwoofers.

Whether you choose our state-of-the-art Home THX® Audio speaker system, an add-on set of surround speakers, or anything in between, no other speakers will give you the exciting performance, sound quality, flexibility and compatibility of M&K's home theater component speakers.



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VIDEO ONLINE

What was the most popular VCR in Britain in 1990? What's wrong with the Swedish video release of *Blade Runner*? How much do replacement bulbs for LCD video projectors cost in Hawaii?

I know, I know. Who cares? Why would you want to know that Britons once rushed to buy Akai's VSA650 VCR with a built-in Dolby Surround Sound decoder? Or that faulty subtitles led Swedish *Blade* buffs to believe that Rutger Hauer's outlaw android is named Roy "Beatty," not Batty. Or that LCD bulbs cost a whopping \$210 in the venues around Diamond Head?

Why would anyone want to know such video esoterica, and pay to find out? The reason may be as simple as: Because it's there. And the plain truth is that thousands find such information not only interesting, but essential. If you think you may be among them, the key question to ask is not why, but how?

The answer is with a computer, a modem and a subscription to a consumer online service. At a transmission rate of 1,200, 2,400, 9,600 or 14,400 baud, you can pose stump-the-band questions and receive detailed replies, sometimes within an hour. You can read hands-on evaluations of video components, scan reviews of prerecorded movies, and then discuss them with fellow fans. You can find shop-

Open Sesame:
The opening screen for CompuServe using the CompuServe Information Manager.

Where to shop, search, cruise and schmooze the video lanes of the information highway

ping advice, or search for good prices among hundreds of vendors. You can broadcast appeals for rare videos or used components—and get results.

Or you can just eavesdrop on the video cognoscenti: "I'm looking at the Panasonic S201, and find it to be a steal

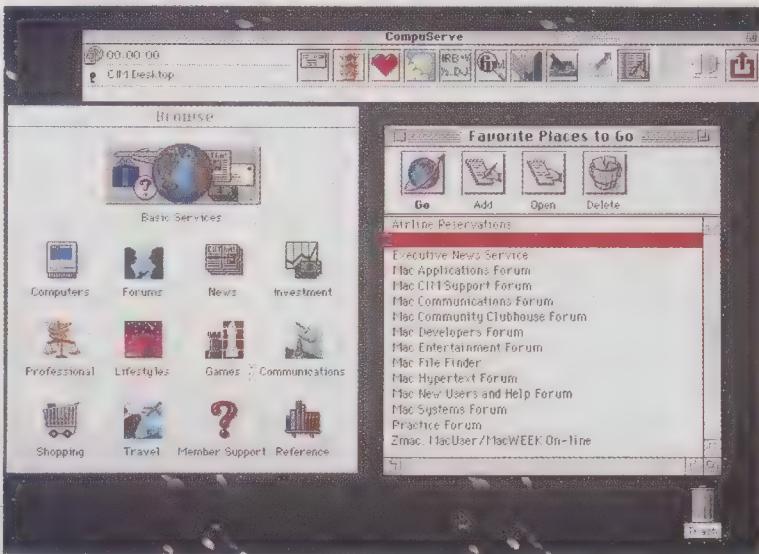
at \$299. I know that it's bare bones, and doesn't have that many features. What does everyone else think?" asks Dan G. one morning in a memo to "ALL" on the Laserdisc/Video section of the Prodigy Arts Club bulletin board.

"I believe that is the Pioneer [laserdisc] player you are talking about," corrects Matt M. four hours later. "The Panasonic player is the LX-600 and is a bit more costly. I would never buy a player without eight-bit digital field memory, but then again those players are twice as much as the 201."

For the video obsessed, popular online computer services offer a treasure trove of video info and advice. Online services, in general, cover a vast territory. Subscribers can look up

information about thousands of subjects, shop at hundreds of online stores, and conduct travel and financial transactions. They can monitor news, weather and sports reports, sample e-mail services and download any of thousands of computer programs, data files, images, sounds and games. The best part for many is the ability to greet, gab and otherwise hobnob with America's technical elite, more than 5 million of whom are already cruising the two-lane blacktops of the information highway.

Video-oriented services, databases and activities are woven into the fabric of the online world, especially in the offerings of the three largest and most popular online services: CompuServe Information Service, America



Press V For Video:

CompuServe's Consumer Electronics Forum (top) and the Manufacturer's Corner in America Online (center) point the way toward video- and audio-oriented sections. Below is the opening screen for America Online.

Online (AOL) and the Prodigy Interactive Personal Service. There are plenty of other online networks, like Delphi and ZiffNet, but CompuServe, AOL and Prodigy, are fairly bursting with video options and have a combined population of 4 million subscribers.

They also offer gateways to the smaller services as well as into the larger online universe represented by the Internet, the global network of networks. The Internet is a rapidly growing, barely navigable ocean of more than 1,000 other networks. The nets are heavily skewed toward scientific and scholarly subjects, but everything from trivia to the sexually explicit can be found there.

AOL offers a free, although limited, gateway to the Internet, and all the major online services offer e-mail access. However, the Internet, which requires some experience to comfortably navigate, has relatively few video resources. CompuServe, AOL and Prodigy have a lot to offer videophiles, and they're simpler to use.

BULLETIN BOARDS

Overheard on Prodigy one Sunday morning, a plea by Jane S.: "Can anyone tell me where I can purchase the video *Thumbelina* by Don Bluth?" By evening, the replies were rolling in. "I know of a *Thumbelina*. Could this be the name?" answered a fellow "netter." "A friend has it new (he received discs from a closeout). I could negotiate a price, if he would want to sell. Interested?" Possibly not, since better offers seemed to be available. "I have a copy of the *Thumbelina* laserdisc," wrote Linda K. "I don't remember what I paid for it, but you can have it for a bit less than retail + shipping."

The most popular service on all online systems is the bulletin board, a sort of digital cracker barrel where cyberfolk gather 'round and exchange opinions, experiences and gossip, and help each other track down rare video treasures, like *Thumbelina*.

The most active video-related bulletin board, forum or message board, is the Consumer Electronics Forum on CompuServe. Within CEForum are 17 distinct topic areas covering key segments of the consumer electronics business, including five specific to video: video

hardware, video software, films/theaters, desktop video and camcorders. Each topic area has a complementary library of reviews, software listings, and news or general information posted by manufacturers, other users or "sysops"—the resident experts and administrators who serve as bulletin board system operators.

To give you an idea of the depth in these areas, there are more than 400 subjects listed just in the video hardware section. If you need to swap personal experiences about Runco video projectors, compare Mitsubishi VCRs, or investigate PAL-to-NTSC tape transfers, this is the place. Each area supports dozens of techno tête-à-têtes filled with video minutiae. The tidbit about the Swedish *Blade Runner* tape, for instance, comes from a 62-page report on the subject by *Blade Runner* aficionado Murray Chapman that I came across in the films/theater section. (While *Blade Runner* is a popular "netter" film, the most ubiquitous video software subject is *Star Trek*.)

Because it's so comprehensive, CompuServe also attracts a lot of big names to CEForum. Film critic Roger Ebert of *Siskel & Ebert* fame turns up for a chat from time to time, and questions about specific video products are often answered by actual engineers or executives. Videonics marketing director Moe Rubenzahl can often be found on CEForum, while Buzz Goddard, national sales manager for Lexicon Consumer Products, frequents AOL. *Video Magazine* senior editor Brent Butterworth has been known to hold forth in CEForum while contributing editor Roderick Woodcock serves as sysop to the camcorder section.

But CompuServe's depth tends to breed a certain amount of *obscurus* per-

Topic	Posts
Mitsubishi 55" Perfect	2
Mitsubishi help needed	4
Which deck for Hi-Fi car?	5
Eastman 325 Recorder	4
song VCR speed default	5
32-BIT PC sound card?	6
PCR +	1
Projection or 35" tube??	3
Coax installation	1
VCR tape stuck inside	2
Sharp info?	5
ProScan vs. Mitsubishi	9
SCART connector pins	1
TV image problems	1
SPDIF	2
Mitsubishi dealers	5

Topics	Postings	Created	Latest
UHS and SUHS Formats	33	04/23/93	10/07/93
LEXICON	34	03/01/93	12/01/93
Harman Video/Fosgate*Audionics	18	02/20/93	11/03/93
Car CD Players	23	02/16/93	11/11/93
HELP	22	02/05/93	11/05/93
High End Audio Forum	54	02/04/93	12/02/93
10TV	30	01/10/93	09/23/93
27" TV suggestions	25	12/02/92	09/09/93
Yamaha Digital Surround Processor	19	10/05/92	11/17/93
speakers	85	09/15/92	11/27/93
Ask Lucasfilm THX	284	08/27/92	11/16/93
Subwoofers	80	06/23/92	12/05/93
The Best ProLogic Receiver is??	131	04/16/92	11/26/93
Pioneer Home Theater Products	347	03/26/92	11/30/93

Topics: 49 Postings: 1571 Created: Latest

List Messages Read 1st Message Find New Find Since... Create Topic Help & Info

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- Visit Hollywood Online and enter to win one of 75 special edition "Thing" sculptures in the new "Addams Family Values" promotion.
- Find the latest words on politics, the environment, culture, and sports in Columnists and Features Online.
- TOP NEWS STORY Shuttle astronauts snare Hubble telescope

obscurus that can be a bit daunting to the less than obsessed. The philosophy at America Online is to appeal to the more data dainty, a broader audience on the whole. For example, the Dolby A/V Forum, which AOL started last September, is not as technically sophisticated, or as elitist, as CompuServe's CEForum. Nevertheless, it offers a wealth of audio/video information and question-and-answer exchanges between users and Dolby executives, as well as representatives from Dolby licensees like Sony. ▶

Joining The Nets

Most online subscribers use one or two of the top three services. Here are their basic charges, additional services available extra and what they have to offer of interest to videophiles.

COMPUSERVE

Address & Phone: 5000 Arlington Center Boulevard, Columbus, OH 43228. 800-848-9990

Basic Cost: \$9.95/month for unlimited access to 50 basic services, with first month free. "Executive" service for additional access costs \$8/hour for 1,200- or 2,400 baud connection. \$16/hour for 9,600- or 4,800 baud connection.

Software: CompuServe Information Manager software for Windows, DOS and Macintosh, \$39.95 each. **Subscribers:** 1.5 million (worldwide).

Overview: Owned by B&R Block, CompuServe is the mother of all online services with 1,700 specialized areas. Still, Hardin says, it and compuserve.com are aimed at Apple users, techies and business types.

Video Services: The most comprehensive video hardware and software archives available online. Bulletin boards populated by knowledgeable and well-known people, and a variety of video hardware and software vendors.

Video Grade: A+

AMERICA ONLINE

Address & Phone: 800 Westwood Center Drive, Vienna, VA 22182/2285. 800-827-6354

Basic Cost: \$9.95 for 5 hrs/month, \$3.50 for each additional hour.

Software: Free; with 10 free trial hours.

Subscribers: 300,000.

Overview: The public version is the fastest growing online service, more than doubling its subscriber base in 1993. At the same time, AOL overall, the easiest to deal with. Its content continues to improve thanks to new software, such as AOL's own AOL Video, the HomeCom program, SmartSearch and Video Warner.

Video Services: Lots of reviews of pre-recorded videos, but little original information and few video-related shopping opportunities. Video-oriented bulletin boards are getting better, but technical forums are still limited in scope and information.

Video Grade: C, but improving

PRODIGY

Address & Phone: 445 Hamilton Avenue, White Plains, NY 10601. 800-PRODIGY

Basic Cost: \$3.50/hour, or \$34.95/month for unlimited access.

Software: Free.

Subscribers: 2 million.

Overview: Ambitious partnership between Sears and IBM is the best-known online service and may actually make money this year after more than six years in the net. Heavily promotes "transactions"—shopping, travel and personal finance—and specializes in up-to-the-minute information, such as news, sports and weather.

Video Services: AOL clients even get new software, but has fewer overall options than AOL, or just for now.

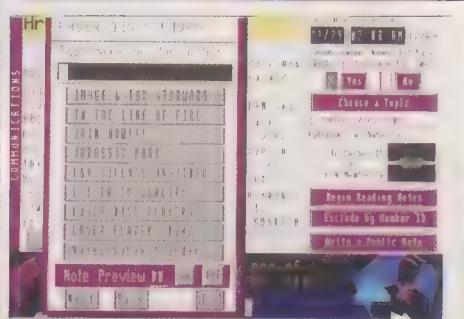
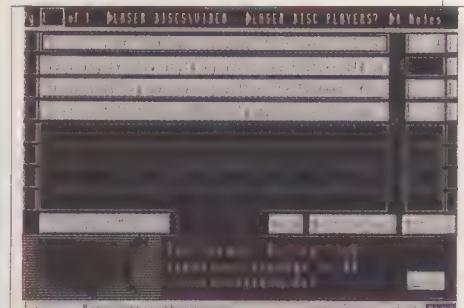
Video Services: Video bulletin boards, though full of information, are not nearly as crowded as they once were due to heavy loss of users to computer-based AOL, more emphasis on pre-recorded software reviews and free access to *Smart Survey of Cinema*, Limited video-oriented thesaurus.

Video Grade: C+

ONLINE

The second most popular use of online services is shopping. Both Prodigy and CompuServe offer access to more than 100 vendors. In fact, some large merchandisers, like JC Penney, Sears and Hammacher Schlemmer, are available on both systems. AOL has a service called Comp-U-Store, a kind of electronic catalog for comparison shoppers. Its database is stuffed with more than 250,000 products.

The services can be especially useful to videophiles, and not just those looking for choice prices. I recently spent an afternoon fruitlessly phoning the largest



Prodigal Parts: Prodigy screens showing bulletin board query about laserdisc players (top) and laserdisc releases for which online previews are available.

video stores in Manhattan searching for episodes of the old *Maverick* TV series. Finally, I turned on my computer. In half an hour, I located and ordered three episodes from rare video mail-order specialists MovieWorks on Prodigy and Critics Choice on CompuServe.

While all three online services provide access to Columbia House, CompuServe also offers The Laser's Edge, a mail-order laserdisc vendor, and Evergreen Entertainment, whose discounted inventory and ordering information are in the video software

section of CEForum.

If mainstream movies and videos are your passion, AOL and Prodigy may be a better choice than CoompuServe, which specializes in hardware discussions. Both AOL and Prodigy have reviews of new movies and video releases (theatrical films as well as those that go directly to video), plus previews of upcoming films and Top 10 charts. Both also let subscribers upload their own opinions about current films for all to read and challenge.

In addition, Prodigy offers easy access to Magill's Survey of Cinema, an extensive reference guide to more than 15,000 films, while AOL carries nationally syndicated newspaper columnists like Robert Bianco, who writes about home video; James Pallot who contributes video movie reviews; and Dick Kleiner who writes a celebrity-based question-and-answer column.

Videophiles, even readers of *Video Magazine*, need no longer live by print alone. There's just too much to know and, anyway, accessing the cyberworld should be a snap. After all, we're just swapping one CRT and disk player for another.

CAMCORNER

continued from page 22

buried under electronic noise. Also, do not touch the volume controls when abrupt voice level changes occur. By the time you do, your camcorder's automatic gain control has already compensated for it, and nothing sounds more amateur than audio levels that bounce around. If the change in mid-take is constant, slowly adjust the volume to compensate. Otherwise, have the subjects stop and start over if it really bothers you.

When you have to deal with wireless lavalieres, there are a few extra concerns at hand. First, be certain all of your mics are broadcasting on separate channels, so that you're not getting crosstalk. Second, make sure that the receivers are mounted or spaced so they don't block each other's signals. And last, monitor the sound carefully — when two or more channels are used, the risk that at least one of them will pick up interference increases.

These techniques will improve your sound in videos where two or more people talk. Whether you go with a mic boom or lavalieres, a little practice will give you truly professional results. A small investment in equipment can make your videos sound just as good as TV shows.

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TAPE & DISCS

NEW RELEASES

FEATURE FILMS

Strictly Ballroom

1993. Paul Mercurio, Tara Morice; co-wr./dir. Baz Luhrmann. Stereo, cc. (PG) 94 min. priced for rental. LD \$39.99. Touchstone.

Even if you have two left feet and bunions on every toe, you won't be able to resist *Strictly Ballroom*, a delightfully goofy Australian comedy that dares to expose the crooked world of professional



Happy Hoofers: *Strictly Ballroom's* dancin' fools.

ballroom dancing.

Strictly Ballroom's Rocky-like hero is Scott, a young dancer who's been training since the age of six to win the ballroom circuit's top contest. But because the competitions are designed to show off the steps taught in the Dance Federation's official line of instructional videos, the contests are about as spontaneous as synchronized swimming — compared to one of these, *The Lawrence Welk Show* looks like a mosh pit.

So when Scott decides to break with tradition and improvise his own steps, everyone is horrified. Ostracized and in need of a new partner, Scott hooks up with Fran, an ugly duckling from the beginner's class — and we all know what happens to ugly ducklings.

True love and Terpsichore triumph, with a little help from Fran's father, played by the Spanish flamenco star Antonio Vargas. *Strictly Ballroom* is a campy fairy tale, filled with delightfully gaudy sets and more teased blonde hair and tacky costumes than the Academy Awards. If it doesn't leave you smiling, you've probably got lockjaw.

—M. Faust

In the Line of Fire

1993. Clint Eastwood, John Malkovich, Rene Russo; dir. Wolfgang Petersen. Surround, cc. (R) 129 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed. \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

In the Line of Fire is the cream of 1993's summer movies, a crackerjack thriller whose star performances and big production values make something remarkable out of what might have been a routine potboiler. The story is in fact structured just like a *Dirty Harry* movie, but the picture is richer at every turn without sacrificing excitement.

Instead of Harry Callahan, Clint Eastwood plays Secret Service agent Frank Horrigan, last active member of the detail that didn't save Kennedy. Now Mitch Leary (John Malkovich), a brilliant psychotic, is playing games with him, daring him to stop him from killing the current President, a nonentity hardly worth the trouble. Frank wants redemption. Mitch, a Cold War dinosaur, wants to validate himself. Their confrontations carry far more tension than any plot device involving the President.

All the President's Persons: *In the Line of Fire's* Eastwood and Russo play equal guardians of the Chief.



Leary is the perfect outlet for Malkovich's understated nervous energy, and he helps goad Eastwood into an even better performance than the one he gave in *Unforgiven*. He plays up not only Horrigan's guts and arrogance, but also his vulnerability, self-doubt and flagging physical skills. Add Rene Russo as Eastwood's love interest and fellow agent, and you've got a film that captivates with its characters, not its plot.

Director Wolfgang Petersen (*Das Boot*) loads the movie with physical and technical details so that they motor it instead of bogging it down. The picture plays so well that you won't notice its lengthy running time. What you will notice is the panning and scanning from Panavision. Laser owners, of course, will know to wait for the letterboxed disc.

—Sol Louis Siegel

The Secret Garden

1993. Maggie Smith, John Lynch; dir. Agnieszka Holland. Surround. (G) 102 min. \$24.96. LD letterboxed \$34.98. Warner.

The Secret Garden applies the elements of Gothic romance — a forbidding house on the windswept moors, a brooding master with a dark secret — to an uplifting story of childlike faith. As in the classic children's book, the story revolves around a trio of lonely kids who add hope to their bleak surroundings when their friendship — and a magical garden plot — bloom.

Another type of magic affects the film's transfer to video. On the big screen, its ambitions seemed overblown by half, like an arthouse film for 10-year-olds. On the small screen, however, what was off-putting becomes hypnotic, pulling you in for a rewarding experience. Except for Smith, typically superb as a cold, efficient housekeeper, the cast is composed of sterling unknowns, especially Kate Maberly as the fiercely independent orphan whose arrival at Craven Manor sets off the action. Lynch, as the heartbroken Lord Craven, is the sole weak link, playing a one-note symphony

EDITOR'S CHOICE

by

kenneth korman



of angst.

Director Holland, acclaimed for foreign films like *Olivier*, *Olivier*, pulls no punches for young audiences, loading the screen with artful imagery and opulent production values to impress any adults who wander into this garden. Screenwriter Thompson continues her streak (*Edward Scissorhands*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*) of wrapping child-appropriate morality tales in clever, commercially-viable entertainments. The result of their collaboration is a tasteful, classically-styled film, the perfect Easter gift for the kids in your life.

—Marianne Meyer

Hamlet is introduced by Olivier's widow, Joan Plowright, and features Arnold as a grenade-tossing, head-chopping Hamlet—but since most of the stunts are directed so deftly, it soon becomes hard to distinguish *Hero* from the movies it mocks. In fact, *Last Action Hero*'s biggest problem is a split personality: It both celebrates and deplores mindless explosions, car wrecks and death-defying escapes.

That said, there are fun moments and gripping action, and Arnold does his best to hold the tale together (although his limited comic abilities are not well-served by sledgehammer action director John McTiernan). *Last Action Hero* is not a dud, and it plays better on video. After all, theatergoers couldn't scan over the boring stuff. —Tom Soter

Nothing But a Man

1964. Abbey Lincoln, Ivan Dixon; dir. Michael Roemer. Mono. (NR) 92 min. priced for rental. New Video.

Some long-lost cult films deserve to remain lost, but *Nothing But a Man* is a stunning work. Director/co-writer Michael Roemer's 1964 look at the romance of two black Alabamans treats its subjects with intelligence, sensitivity and humor, yet never lets an enlightened outlook interfere with a fascinating story. Though Duff (Ivan Dixon) and Josie (Abbey Lincoln) contend with racism in their sleepy small town, these young lovers aren't cardboard characters designed to illustrate a moral—they're complex individuals with more to worry about than bigots. He's a laborer from the "section gang" that maintains the railroad tracks; she's a proper minister's daughter whose family is appalled by her suitor's lowly social standing. And when Duff isn't trying to win over Josie's snooty dad, he's reaching out to his own estranged father, a skid-row resident in nearby Birmingham.



Bard to the Bone: Even a witty parody of *Hamlet* can't save *Last Action Hero* from itself.

Last Action Hero

1993. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Charles Dance, Anthony Quinn, Austin O'Brien; dir. John McTiernan. Surround, cc. (PG-13) 130 min. priced for rental. Columbia TriStar.

Is it as bad as they say? That's the big question about Arnold Schwarzenegger's \$100 million *Last Action Hero*. Certainly the premise has promise: What happens when the glitzy fantasy world of movie super-hero Jack Slater (Schwarzenegger) connects with the gritty real world of young hero-worshipper Danny Madigan (Austin O'Brien)?

The film is obviously meant to be a free-wheeling parody and does have some clever jokes—a spoof of Olivier's

Nostalgia can ruin an otherwise promising movie, replacing real emotion with gooey sentiment and cheap laughs. Though it's been compared to films like *American Graffiti*, *Dazed and Confused* (MCA/Universal; VHS priced for rental, laserdisc \$34.98) is no wistful look back at a simpler and more innocent time. Covering 24 hours in the life of a large group of Texas teenagers on the last day of school, 1976, *Dazed and Confused* has it all: Hip-huggers, shag carpet, 8-tracks, you name it. But it transcends nostalgia with sheer authenticity. If you're currently in your early-to-mid 30s and mis-spent a significant portion of your youth, prepare for a singular shock of self-recognition.



Dazed and Confused

The teens in writer/director Richard Linklater's wonderful second film (*Slacker* was his first) do what all American teens do: ride around in cars, indulge in far too much beer and pot, make friends, make out, start fights, wax prophetic, etc. An aimless yet somehow exuberant evening leads to an all-night beer bust in the woods, where... nothing much happens at all. The movie lacks a plot in the usual sense, but that's the point: When you're 16 or 17 and stuck in what seems an endless suburban wasteland, it feels like *your life* lacks a plot. Besides, who needs something as labored and contrived as a storyline in a movie as funny and good-natured as this? It's the small moments and details that count. *Dazed and Confused* is so personal, it actually works better on video than on a large theatrical screen.

Special mention must be made of the movie's soundtrack. From Aerosmith to Ted Nugent to Lynyrd Skynyrd, it captures the spirit of the time. Led Zeppelin's absence glares, but former lead-singer Robert Plant reportedly didn't want to be associated with "the past." Me, I'm just glad I'll have *Dazed and Confused* to show my grandchildren one day. If nothing else, grandpa sure knew how to have a good time.

Though Roemer deserves praise for

TAPES & DISCS

Life Lessons:
Loners Mel Gibson and
Nick Stahl in *The Man
Without A Face*.

sympathetic perceptions, the actors are equally wonderful. Dixon and Lincoln (now a top jazz singer) convey a world of emotions through understatement, showing how people with little in common but race must struggle to build a relationship. The low-key, naturalistic approach of *Nothing But a Man* might strike impatient viewers as old-fashioned, but its insights into the human heart are timeless.

—Jon Young

The Fox and The Hound

1981. Anim. Dir. A. Stevens, T. Berman, R. Rich. (G) 83 min. \$24.99. Walt Disney.

After being dazzled by such Disney gems as *Aladdin* and *Beauty and the Beast*, it's impossible to generate similar enthusiasm for *The Fox and the Hound*. Released theatrically in 1981, when the company's artistic and commercial fortunes were yet to rebound, this adventure tale of childhood pals turned mortal foes hardly qualifies as a failure, still surpassing many recent non-Disney animated features. However, the wit, the romantic sweep and the great songs of the studio's later classics are nowhere in evidence.

Tod is a spirited fox pup taken in by kindly old Widow Tweed; his next-door neighbor, Copper, will soon train to become a crack hunting dog. When their owners aren't looking, these youngsters sneak off to frolic together. After they grow up, of course, Tod and Copper meet in less happy circumstances. Dramatic possibilities abound in the inevita-

ble clash between these former friends, but heavy-handed execution mutes the thrills. The action is often too brutal for younger viewers, underscoring an unpleasantly violent sensibility—indeed, the use of gunplay for comic relief badly dates this relatively recent film. In any case, Tod and Copper are both likable critters, although the impossibility of a true reconciliation adds a depressing undertone to the happy ending. —JY

The Man Without a Face

1993. Mel Gibson, Nick Stahl, Margaret Whitton; dir. Gibson. Surround, cc. (PG-13) 115 min. priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$34.98. Warner.

Mel Gibson has made a career of playing misanthropes—the suicidal cop in *Lethal Weapon*, the burned out hero of *The Road Warrior*—but he's never played the kind of misanthrope he tackles in *The Man Without a Face*. Although it sounds like something that should star Vincent Price, *Face* is actually a touching drama about two unhappy loners: young Charles Norstadt, a misunderstood teen with a dream of going to a top-flight military academy, and Justin McLeod, a facially scarred mystery man who lives in isolation following the mysterious death of a child.

Based on a novel by Isabelle Holland and beautifully photographed in Maine, the movie is an expertly crafted exploration of trust, responsibility and love, a kind of *To Sir With Love* meets *The Phantom of the Opera*. As McLeod, Gib-



son shows that he can play more than a hunk with a handgun and offers a genuinely moving performance as the scarred ex-teacher drawn out of himself by his young pupil (well-played by Nick Stahl).

Gibson also directed and delivers a satisfying tear-jerker with a worthwhile message: Look beyond appearances at a person's soul. It's too bad theatergoers, who largely avoided the movie, didn't look beyond the off-putting title. Now's their chance.

—TS

Palombella Rossa

1989. Nanni Moretti, Mariella Valentini; wr./dir. Moretti. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 90 min. priced for rental. Fox Lorber.

Despite having made a half-dozen impressive features, Italian auteur Nanni Moretti is virtually unknown in North America. It's not surprising that his sharply comic dissections of the social and political habits of his countrymen haven't been released here. But viewers weaned on Fellini, Godard and Bunuel will find Moretti's work a cause for celebration.

An ardent (though unregistered) communist, Moretti is his party's sharpest critic, and *Palombella Rossa* is his satire on the failure of Eurocommunism to live up to its ideals. If the subject sounds a bit dry, Moretti's approach is anything but. His character Michele is a communist politician and water polo star who loses his memory. Over the course of the film, Michele struggles to remember his past while playing a championship match that is constantly interrupted with flashbacks from his personal and professional lives.

While some of his satire of current Italian affairs is bound to go over the heads of American audiences, Moretti's energetic physical and verbal wit and the film's surrealistic format compensate. Kudos to Fox Lorber for bringing Moretti to video without waiting for an American theatrical release to pave the way, a welcome example of video taking the high road to assert its independence from theatrical distribution.

—MF

Opposites Attract: Tod and Copper in Walt Disney's *The Fox and the Hound*





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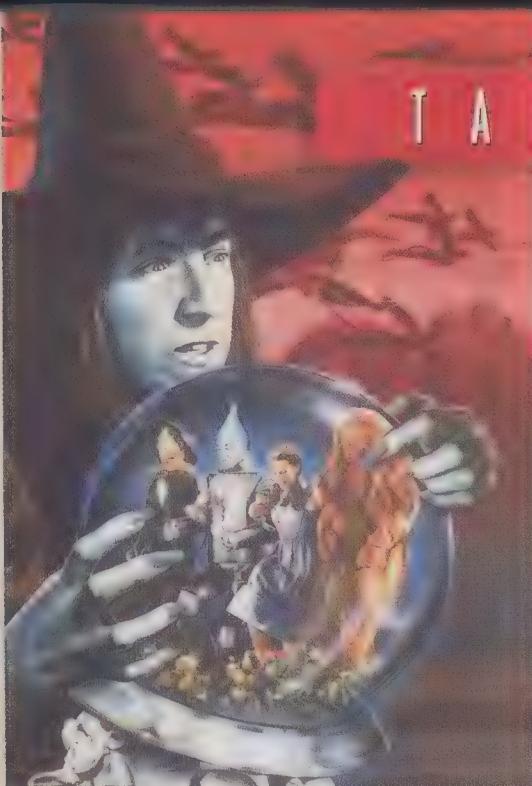
IRVING BERLIN'S
SECOND FIDDLE

Filled with Irving Berlin songs, this witty romantic comedy is a charming fictional account of Hollywood in its heyday. TYRONE POWER and RUDY VALLEE provide lots of laughs and music and SONJA HENIE makes nice.

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RAGTIME BAND

This nostalgic tribute to Irving Berlin stars and thrills. JAMES CAGNEY, ROBERT MITCHUM, ETHEL MERMAN, and ALICE FAYE star in a romantic comedy musical that earned Academy Award® nominations including Best Picture (1938).

ALEXANDER'S
RAGTIME
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two discs, while a third contains a 52-minute documentary hosted by Angela Lansbury and containing interviews with the cast and crew. Side six contains more interviews plus outtake footage, rare stills, poster art and more. A printed copy of the shooting script rounds out the box.

The Ultimate Oz is so well-produced, it should serve as a model for special-edition laserdisks. That includes the 60th anniversary *Oz* we expect to see at the end of the decade—in high definition, of course.

—BE

Terminator 2: Judgement Day— Special Edition

1991. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton, Robert Patrick; dir. James Cameron. Digital surround, letterboxed. (NR) 152 min. plus supplement, CLV 2 sides/CAV 3 sides. \$119.95. Pioneer/LIVE.

If a good magician never reveals his tricks, count James Cameron among the top renegades. Having bared the behind-the-scenes workings of his previous action spectacles *Aliens* and *The Abyss* in laserdisc collector editions, the writer/director trumps himself royally with *Terminator 2: Judgement Day—Special Edition*. Loaded with extras, this is the one to whip out when you want to show the uninitiated just why you've put down a C-note plus change to own a movie.

The film proper is presented on three CLV sides in widescreen, exhibiting the same precise color and clarity as the 1991 pan-and-scan and widescreen disc versions, which some regard as the highest-quality laserdisks ever produced.

What T2SE adds is about 16 minutes of new footage (providing a bit more emotional resonance) seamlessly dropped into the action, all under the auspices of THX quality control. If not for the restoration notes on the six-panel brochure, your eye (and ear) would never detect the insertions.

Let's say, for argument's sake, the T2 is not your favorite cinematic rollercoaster. Let's say that shootings, explosions and shattering glass, all serving a story about a super-cyborg killing machine from the future, are a little overdone. You'll still revel in this set's three CAV sides of supplemental material, which delve into every aspect of the production from Cameron's first glimmerings of a *Terminator* sequel eight years ago to the minutiae of its scientific underpinnings. Nothing of consequence—the script (presented here in full), casting, groundbreaking computer and "morph" effects, modeling, storyboarding, sound editing, the publicity campaign—escapes the attention of supplement writer/director Van Ling and producer Casey Cannon.

The supplement is a wonder of organization, using film clips, outtakes, insightful essays (in a highly legible typeface) and interviews. More interview material with some two dozen cast and crew is heard on the right analog soundtrack during the film itself. The slipcase box is plush and impressive, unlike the cheap pasteboard of many expensive boxed sets. The inner case is extra-sturdy and the leather-look outer case is padded like a fine art book. Glorious.

—Andy Wickstrom

Horszowski Live at Carnegie Hall

1990. Mieczyslaw Horszowski, piano; dir. Reiko Ohara. Digital stereo. (NR) 94 min. CLV 2 sides \$34.97. Teldec.

Bach: Goldberg Variations

1990. András Schiff, piano; dir. Janós Dáváss. Digital stereo. (NR) 81 min. CLV 2 sides \$34.97. Teldec.

Mieczyslaw Horszowski gave his first Carnegie Hall recital at age 14 in 1906, and his second, the one preserved here, in 1990. (He was 100 when he died last year.) In between he had a remarkable career as piano soloist, chamber musician and teacher. With his unassuming

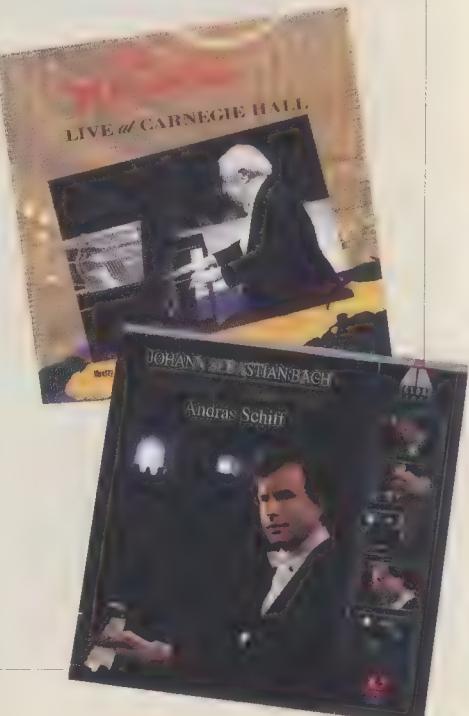
character and his taste and restraint at the keyboard, he didn't have (or need) a superstar career like others of his generation, and many didn't appreciate his special gifts until he was the only one left.

Horszowski's technique is in surprisingly good shape as he illuminates Bach, Beethoven, Schumann and, especially, Chopin. Slow movements sing, simple phrases speak volumes, and he still commands a big dynamic range. The video production plays up the irony of this small, ancient man, playing a massive Steinway on a huge stage in a vast hall and scoring a triumph. By the way, Horszowski plays Chopin's Impromptu No. 2, not No. 3 as claimed on the program insert, which also gets wrong the year of Toscanini's death.

András Schiff, a young master in full command of an awesome technique, applies it to a direct and immediate reading of Bach's monumental *Goldberg Variations*. Schiff isn't out to startle or challenge us like Glenn Gould; though he stretches the performance to 80 minutes, his interpretation is intimate throughout, as if he's playing for himself alone. The effect is underscored by unusually close camera work and lighting that renders the live audience nearly invisible.

Piano buffs will want to experience both of these discs.

—SLS



Nothing Sacred

1937. Fredric March, Carole Lombard; dir. William Wellman. Digital mono. (NR) 100 min. CLV 2 sides. \$39.95. Lumivision.

The Devil Bat/ Scared To Death

1940/1946. B&W/Color. Bela Lugosi, Dave O'Brien, George Zucco; dir. Jean Yarborough/Christy Cabanne. 140 min. CLV 3 sides \$49.95. Lumivision.

These new disc editions make the oft-abused public domain films in question look as good as they likely ever will. It's debatable whether the Lugosi films rate such careful presentation, but *Nothing Sacred* is one of the best film comedies ever made, and deserves a place in any collection.

One section of the Technicolor print used for *Nothing Sacred* is flawed, but overall it's a gem. The story, about a woman whose supposed terminal illness is parlayed by a reporter into a *cause célèbre*, gave director William Wellman license to send up numerous screen conventions, and he wrings the last drop of venom from Ben Hecht's script. Carole Lombard is a powerhouse, nearly overwhelming the very animated March, and the sight gags alone are worth several viewings. The bonus materials only elevate the disc to Criterion-type value.

In *The Devil Bat*, Bela Lugosi breeds a giant bat that will attack anyone wearing an experimental shaving lotion. The print is speckled but very clean, which makes the bat look delightfully stupid. *Scared To Death* is a confusing mess, but it's notable for its use of color, which looks good but doesn't help. —BE

The Connery Collection, Vol. II

1993 comp. *Thunderball* (1965), *You Only Live Twice* (1967), *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971). Sean Connery, Claudine Auger, Donald Pleasence, Jill St. John; dir. Terence Young (*Thunderball*), Lewis Gilbert (*Twice*), Guy Hamilton (*Diamonds*). Digital stereo, letterboxed. (PG) 364 min. CLV 8 sides \$69.98. MGM/UA.

James Bond producers Albert R. Broccoli and Harry Saltzman love gadgets. But they must love explosions almost as much, considering the number that turn up in the three Bond films included in *The Connery Collection, Vol. II*:



No Glove No Love: Sean Connery makes a new friend in *Thunderball*, his fourth turn as James Bond.

Underwater, in the air or inside a volcano, you name it and Broccoli and Saltzman can blow it up. But luckily, there's more to super-spy 007 than dynamite, or else there would be no interest in this boxed set, the umpteenth repackaging of Bond for the laser market.

The best Bonds define classy adventure, and the best Bonds all have Sean Connery. The actor is the highlight of the trio of tales featured here, which demonstrate the highs and lows of the series. The world-menacing action, beautiful women and exotic locales are all plentiful, but so are trends that helped destroy the series' integrity in the Roger Moore years: excessive gadgetry (*Thunderball*), too much travelogue (*You Only Live Twice*) and too many jokes (*Diamonds Are Forever*). For all that, *Twice* has great pacing and *Diamonds* has great wit, the latter accentuated by Connery's deliciously deadpan delivery.

Besides trailers and chapter stops, *The Connery Collection* offers little that can't be had elsewhere and adds a few major gaffes, as well. The brief background literature features inaccurate running times, an inflated budget for *Thunderball* and the laughable assertion that Bond's creator, Ian Fleming—dead one year when *Thunderball* was made—"teamed with Broccoli and Saltzman to produce a new version of the screenplay." Indeed. If the author of such misinformation had worked for 007's

nemesis SPECTRE, he would have already received a visit from The Execution Branch.

—Tom Soter

Mickey Mouse: The Black and White Years

1993 comp. B&W/Color. *Mickey Mouse*, *Minnie Mouse*, *Donald Duck*, *Pluto*; dir. various. Digital mono. (NR) 244 min. CAV 10 sides \$124.99. Walt Disney.

Fans of Mickey Mouse will delight in this package, an all-CAV treasure trove of material from the mouse's formative years. Included are 33 black-and-white cartoons, a recently discovered color short produced for the 1932 Academy Awards, the original animated pencil test sequence for "The Mail Pilot" (1933) and over 1,000 story sketches which offer a before-and-after look at the work of the Walt Disney Studios animators.

Much of the footage in the lavishly produced collection is fascinating, especially in the earliest shorts where Mickey is less mouse and more rat. He smokes, drinks and cuts up like any wild youngster as he pulls nasty stunts on cats who try to repress him. Mickey is irrepressible, however: He's constantly dancing, skipping and playing a mean piano. It's no wonder the relentlessly cheerful mouse was a big hit in the Depression. His buoyant optimism—he plays a harmonica while working on a chain gang—is infectious.

The shorts are presented chronologically, starting with the first, *Steamboat Willie* in 1928 and concluding with *Mickey's Service Station* in 1935. Most feature the thinnest of plots—*Mickey's Follies* and *Mickey's Revue* are simply excuses for characters to sing and dance—and the majority emphasize music and slapstick over storyline and lack the kind of verbal artistry that later Warner Bros. cartoons would make their trademark.

Still, the animation is delightful and remarkably fluid, and the pictures have been lovingly restored throughout (not a lot could be done with many of the scratchy soundtracks). Marred only slightly by Disney's typical tendency to horde its product (MGM/UA's similar but CLV-format *Golden Age of Looney Tunes* boxes feature twice as many shorts), *Mickey Mouse: The Black and White Years* is an almost perfect package, ideal for kids and collectors of all ages.

—Tom Soter

TAPES & DISCS



CLASSICS

L'Argent

1983. Christian Patey, Caroline Lang; dir. Robert Bresson. Mono. (NR) 82 min. priced for rental. *New Yorker*.

More than any of the great directors, Robert Bresson exemplifies the term "auteur." He used non-professional or inexperienced actors (he preferred to call them "models") who would do precisely what he told them and nothing more. He exercised similar control over every element of his films to ensure that nothing detracted from the theme he wished to explore. *L'Argent* (*Money*), Bresson's last film, is almost like a fable in its inexorable story of the moral degradation of a man condemned for a crime he didn't commit. Like all of his work, *L'Argent* demands close attention, but rewards it with unforgettable images of emotional resonance. —MF

Six In Paris

1966. Etienne Becker, Alain Levant; wr./dir. Jean Donchet, Jean Rouch, Jean-Daniel Pollet, Eric Rohmer, Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 93 min. \$69.95. *New Yorker*.

A popular European idea that unfortunately never caught on in the U.S., omnibus films are collections of short works by different directors, tied together by a common theme. (*New York Stories* is a rare American example.) These compilations give directors the chance to work with minor ideas that don't merit expansion into features, while ensuring them an audience normally denied short films. —MF

For *Six in Paris*, producer Barbet Schroeder asked six "new wave" directors to make a 16mm short about a Paris neighborhood. While the result isn't one of the stronger omnibus films (the Godard episode is amusing but surprisingly trivial), fans of French cinema will want to see it for early works by Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol.

Chabrol's *La Muette* looks remarkably like a sketch for one of his longer films about the horrors of bourgeois life, with Chabrol and Stephane Audran as a married couple whose son finds a way to escape their incessant bickering.

In Rohmer's witty *Place de l'Etoile*, a fussy sales clerk who thinks he has murdered a man is forced to rearrange his daily schedule. Rohmer effectively contrasts the clerk's introverted nature with the broad expanse of the plaza he crosses on his way to and from work every day. —MF

The Mystery of Kasper Hauser

1975. Bruno S., Walter Ladengast; wr./dir. Werner Herzog. (NR) 110 min. priced for rental. *New Yorker*.

Also known as *Every Man For Himself*.



Love For Sale:

A hooker (Micheline Dax) intimidates a customer in *Six in Paris*.

self and God Against All, this memorable Werner Herzog film was based on the true story of a young man who was found in a village square in 1828. Unable to walk or communicate, he is eventually discovered to have spent all of his life chained in a basement. Herzog sees this story as a clash between innocence and the deadening effects of civilization. Along with a beautifully understated visual tone, the film is memorable for the performance of Bruno S., a former mental patient who seems eerily attuned to the enigmatic character he's required to play. —MF

SPECIAL INTEREST

Collecting America

1991. B&W/color. Pr./dir. Jonathan Blank. Hi-Fi mono. (NR) 50 min. \$24.95. Red Hat Productions (800-759-5700).

Even as a kid, I was never into baseball cards, and the idea of grown men bidding tens of thousands of dollars for the rarest of them seems absurd to me now. But this predisposition didn't keep me from enjoying Jonathan Blank's funny, informative documentary on the card-collecting phenomenon, laced as it is with irony and not a little doubt regarding the motives of the various participants.

Collecting America is fast-paced as documentaries go, beautifully combining snippets of interviews with dealers, fans, market analysts and Hall-of-Famers. All attest to the seriousness with which baseball cards are now treated as collectibles, and to the extraordinary money behind both vintage cards and newly produced and signed items. The best moments come late in the program: Ex-players (especially from the Negro Baseball leagues) consider with some irony that their old uniforms are now worth as much or more than they ever earned in a season, while some of the old-time fans resent the fact that collecting baseball cards — like the sport itself — has become more a business opportunity than a passion.

The film is exceptionally well-edited and surprisingly even-handed. One comes away with a real understanding of the subject, but also with doubts about what collecting memorabilia has to do with the game that Ruth, Gehrig and Williams came to play. —BE

MUSIC

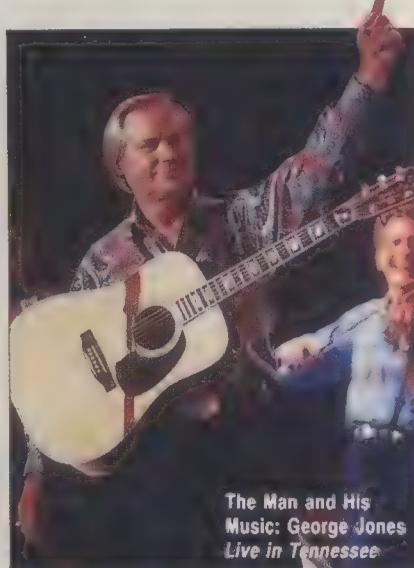
George Jones: Live in Tennessee

1993. Dir. Terry Maskell. Hi-fi stereo. (NR) 54 min. \$19.95. Entertainment Direct.

"This old world is full of singers/But just a few are chosen/To tear your heart out when they sing..." On paper, the idea of George Jones crying "Who's Gonna Fill Their Shoes" in tribute to Willie, Hag and Waylon sounds crazy—after all, when it comes to tearing out hearts, the man they call The Possum is the Christian Barnard of country music. On vinyl, video or 8-Track, George Jones makes you forget about the competition even while he's stretching their names through your ears.

Live In Tennessee starts with an intro by Alan Jackson, the first man to have a hit song about George Jones (or at least the first man besides George Jones to have a hit song about George Jones). Then George hits the stage with a poke at his tortured past ("No Show Jones"), finishes with a skid alongside his status as an elder-statesman ("I Don't Need No Rockin' Chair") and stuffs the middle with a dozen greatest-hits glued together with patter so old it would probably stick to anything.

Live In Tennessee is so simple it's damn near perfect. To borrow a quote from, I think, Julia Child: "It's hard to screw up possum." —John Walker



The Man and His
Music: George Jones
Live in Tennessee

of half its plot and blandly directed by Tom Cruise. But the tape closes with the series' most entertaining episode, "Since I Don't have You," a James Elroy story with L.A. troubleshooter Gary Busey searching for a girl who has captured the hearts of both Howard Hughes (Tim Matheson) and mobster Mickey Cohen (James Woods). Preposterously overplotted, it's directed with tongue firmly in cheek by Jonathan Kaplan.

The better balanced second volume opens with "Dead End For Delia," starring Gary Oldman as a cop looking for his ex-wife's killer, directed in typical overheated style by Phil Joanou (also responsible for the series' inane introductions). Raymond Chandler's "I'll be Waiting," with Bruno Kirby as a hotel detective whose efforts to protect a guest lead to trouble, is the best episode

of the series, surprisingly well directed by Tom Hanks.

—MF

The Ren & Stimpy Show

1993. Comp. Anim. Three volumes: "The Classics," "The Stupidest Stories," "The Stinkiest Stories." Hi-fi stereo. (NR) 40 min. each. \$14.98 each. Sony Wonder/Nickelodeon.

A kids' cartoon for grown-ups, *The Ren and Stimpy Show* is the funniest thing to hit television since *The Simpsons*. Appropriately for a show broadcast on cable's Nickelodeon channel, creator John Kricfalusi has designed a dead-on parody of '50s television, filled with deco backgrounds and an elevator-music soundtrack. The characters and humor, however, derive from early *Mad Magazine* and '80s illustrators like Big Daddy Roth and Basil Wolverton. The show is clever, lively and sublimely ridiculous.

What really sets this apart from, say, *The Donna Reed Show* is its wallowing in the kind of stuff that young children find funny. Like your average two-year-old, Ren and Stimpy are preoccupied with bodily functions, getting naked and putting things in their mouths.

Like *The Simpsons* and *Beavis and Butt-head*, *Ren and Stimpy* outrage many who feel animation is the exclusive province of pre-teens. But the worst that can be said about the show's effect on young viewers is that it may prolong the behavior their parents are so desperately waiting for them to outgrow. —MF

TELEVISION

Fallen Angels

1993. Laura Dern, Peter Gallagher, Gary Oldman, James Woods; dir. Tom Cruise, Alfonso Cuaron, Jonathan Kaplan, Phil Joanou, Tom Hanks, Steven Soderbergh. Stereo, cc. (NR) 2 volumes 90 min. each. Priced for rental. Polygram.

The idea of a cable TV series of stories by writers of great hard-boiled fiction certainly sounded promising, and Showtime's *Fallen Angels* attracted more than its share of talent to work in front of and behind the camera. But too many of these six half-hour segments wallow in film noir affectations.

Volume one opens with the weakest entry, "The Frightening Frammis," a mediocre Jim Thompson story stripped



D I R E C T O R Y

HIGHLIGHTS

Andrei Rublev

1966. Anatoli Solonitzine, Ivan Lapikov; dir. Andrei Tarkovsky. Uncut, previously unseen version of Tarkovsky's masterpiece on the nature of art and its role in society, with a brutal medieval Russia standing in for the Soviet Union. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 205 min. LD \$99.95. Criterion.

Bloodlust: Subspecies III

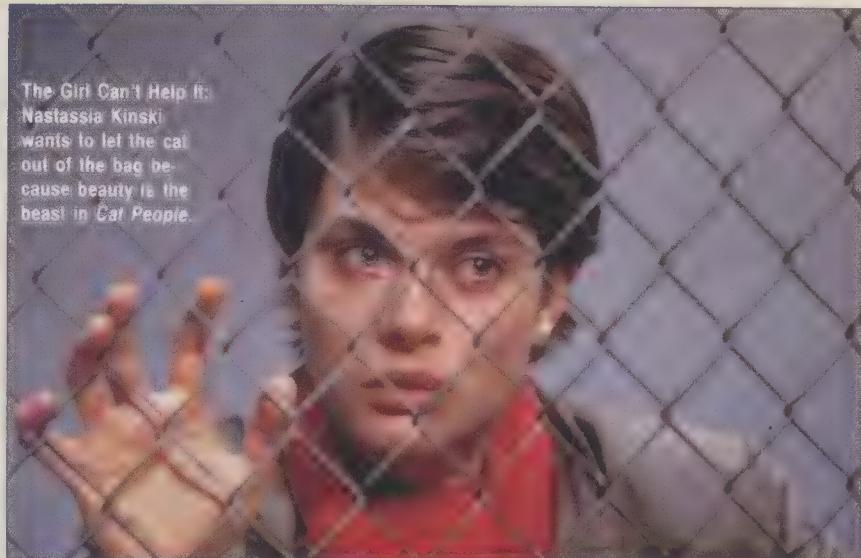
1993. Anders Hove, Denice Duff, Kevin Blair, Melanie Shatner; dir. Ted Nicolaou. Becky fights for sister's soul as Radu stirs up trouble again between humans and vampires at castle Vladislav. Surround. (NR) 83 min. VHS priced for rental. Paramount.

The Blue Hour

1991. Andreas Herder, Dina Leipzig; dir. Marcel Gisler. Berlin callboy comes to rescue of female neighbor wounded by love; an unusual romance begins to form until return of her boyfriend. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 87 min. VHS only, \$39.95. Water Bearer Films. (212-580-8185).

Cat People

1982. Nastassja Kinski, Malcolm McDowell; dir. Paul Schrader. Every time Kinski has sex she turns into a panther and must kill before she can turn back. Schrader's version focuses on the freeing of the beast that inevitably leads to "little deaths." Sur-



round. (R) 119 min. LD letterboxed \$34.98. MCA/Universal.

Future Shock

1993. Vivian Schilling, Martin Kove; dir. Eric Parkinson. Psychiatrist uses virtual reality to force patients to confront their deepest fears but soon discovers the error of his ways. Stereo. (PG) or (NR) 93 min. VHS only, \$89.95. Hemdale.

Manhattan Murder Mystery

1993. Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, Angelica Huston, Alan Alda; dir. Allen. Back together with old co-star Keaton and old co-writer Marshall Brickman, Woody manages a close approximation of his old magic. Mono. (PG) 107 min. VHS priced for rental. LD \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

Labels For Less



Audrey Hepburn and Cary Grant in *Charade*.

Conspiracy! You'll find it everywhere this month and it won't cost you dearly. What's going on in *The Russia House*? What's happening in *In the Heat of the Night*? And what the heck's *The Wilby Conspiracy*? Nobody's talking, but slip MGM/UA \$14.95 for each and you might get the story.

There's global Nazi conspiracy from Avid with *The Eagle Has Landed* and *The Boys From Brazil*, \$9.98 (EP speed) or \$14.98 (SP) each, while Columbia TriStar presents a conspiracy of silence in *A Few Good Men* (\$19.95). MCA/Universal hatches conspiracy to murder in *The Glass Key*, to murder and defraud in *Double Indemnity* and *Charade* and to defraud, murder and topple Middle Eastern governments in *Arabesque*, each at \$14.98.

But at Warner it's one conspiracy after another: sexual (*Dangerous Liaisons*), governmental (*All the President's Men*) and just business (*Goodfellas* and *Unforgiven*), each at \$19.98. Who killed Malcolm X? Who killed JFK?

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Masala

1993. Saeed Jaffrey, Srinivas Krishna; dir. Krishna. The "Canadian-Indian James Dean" produced, directed and starred in this ambitious, scathing black comedy about a blue god and an ex-junkie trying to make good. Stereo. (NR) 105 min. VHS only, \$89.95. Fox Lorber.

The Meteor Man

1993. Robert Townsend, Bill Cosby, Marla Gibbs, James Earl Jones, Eddie Griffin, Big Daddy Kane, Luther Vandross, Simbad; dir. Townsend. Inner-city teacher hit by meteor gets superpowers, brings peace to the hood. Hit Motown soundtrack and DC comic follow. Surround. (PG) 99 min. VHS \$94.99, LD \$34.98. MGM/UA.

Monolith

1993. John Hurt, Lou Gossett Jr., Bill Paxton, Lindsay Frost; dir. John Eyres. Cop team on murder case uncovers secret project to harness energy of deadly alien creature that lives under government installation. Surround. (R) 96 min. VHS priced for rental. MCA/Universal.

Much Ado About Nothing

1993. Emma Thompson, Denzel Washington, Keanu Reeves, Michael Keaton, Kenneth Branagh; dir. Branagh. Title says it all: Shakespeare meets *Baywatch* via *Room With A View*. Only saving grace: Keanu Reeves still playing Bill. Totally Shakespeare. Surround. (PG-13) 111 min. VHS priced for rental. LD tk. Columbia TriStar.

Poetic Justice

1993. Janet Jackson, Tupac Shakur, Regina King; dir. John Singleton. Two more survivors in Singleton's hood use creative self-expression to battle hopelessness and the trauma of living in a war-zone. Surround. (R) 109 min. VHS priced for rental. LD \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

continued on page 66

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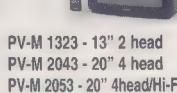


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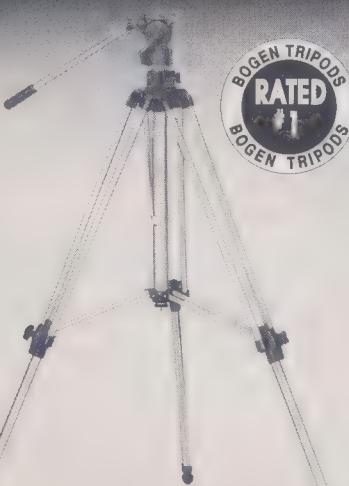
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continued from page 62

Red Rock West

1993. Nicholas Cage, Dennis Hopper, Lara Flynn Boyle; dir. John Dahl. Drifter, mistaken for hit-man, is hired by both a husband and wife to whack each other. *El Mariachi* meets *The Inspector General*. Surround. (R) 98 min. VHS \$89.95. LD \$34.95. Columbia TriStar.

That Night

1993. Juliette Lewis, C. Thomas Howell, Eliza Dushku; dir. Craig Bolotin. Long Island Catholic girl falls for wrong-side-of-the-tracks tough circa 1961 and comes up against pre-sexual revolution mores. At least they have great tunes. Surround. (PG-13) 89 min. VHS priced for rental. LD letterboxed \$34.98. Warner.

The Thing Called Love

1993. River Phoenix, Samantha Mathis, Dermot Mulroney; dir. Peter Bogdanovich. New York City cowboy, along with three other country hopefuls, tries to conquer Music City (Nashville). Surround. (PG-13) 116 min. LD letterboxed \$34.95. Paramount.

The Wrong Man

1993. Rosanna Arquette, Kevin Anderson, John Lithgow; dir. Jim McBride. Hunted for murder, innocent meets friendly couple and falls hard for femme-fatale wife. Lies, double-cross and murder follow. Stereo. (R) 98 min. VHS priced for rental. LD \$34.98. Republic Pictures.

SPECIAL INTEREST

Anima Mundi

1993. dir. Godfrey Reggio. The collaboration of Reggio and Philip Glass that created *Koyaanisqatsi* and *Powqqatsi* now turn their gaze to the endless variety of animals on the planet. Mono. 30 min. \$19.98. LD \$29.98. Miramar.

Astroboy 30th Anniversary Collection Series

1963. B&W. Prod. Osamu Tezuka and Fred Ladd. Classic 60's cartoon show about the boy with jet-pack boots and a cheerful smile. Japanese animation without sex or nasty violence. Two episodes per tape. Mono. VHS only, \$14.95 each. 50 min. each. The Right Stuff.

Boris Godunov

1990. Robert Lloyd, Olga Borodina, Alexei Stebljansko, Sergei Leifreks; conducted by Valery Gergiev, dir. Andrei Tarkovsky. Designed by Tarkovsky in 1983, this production of Mussorgsky's masterpiece could hardly be more relevant to these times. Taped at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. Stereo. 210 min. \$44.95. LD \$69.95. PolyGram.

Fires of Kuwait

1991. Dir. David Douglas. Oscar-nominated IMAX documentary on the spectacular, heroic fighting against 600 raging oil-well fires set by retreating Iraqi troops. Surround. (NR) 36 min. CAV LD \$39.95. Lumivision.

Norman Rockwell: An American Artist

1991. Nar. Mason Adams, dir. Mary Rawson. Commemorative release for centennial of Rockwell birth, with commentary from artists and social critics including Erma Bombeck, Frank Deford and Rockwell himself. Stereo. 60 min. VHS only, \$29.98. V.I.E.W. (212) 674-5550.

KIDVID

Casper Cartoons - Volume 5

1994 comp. Casper the friendly ghost appears in four more tales (separate on VHS or collected on laserdisc): *Outer Space*, *Furry Friends*, *Ghost Buddies*, *Secret Powers*. Mono. 23-24 min. each VHS (\$9.98), 92 min. LD (\$34.98). MCA/Universal.

Toe Belly Up Belly

1992. Host Jack Leonard; dir. Frank Beach. National Gymnastics Champion Leonard battles rising child obesity and introduces kids to fitness with playful exercises. Stereo. 35 min. VHS only, \$19.95. Beach Associates (800-FIT-4-FUN).

LASERDISCS

Un Coeur En Hiver (A Heart In Winter)

1993. Daniel Auteuil, Emmanuelle Beart, Andre Dussollier; dir. Claude Sautet. A beautiful woman, two men, mad unrequited love, beautiful music, French accents. Winner of Best Picture at Venice and Best Director in France. Stereo, subtitled. (NR) 100 min. VHS priced for rental. LD \$34.98. Republic Pictures.

continued on page 98



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audio video

The term audio/video is a vestige from another era — a time when they were two separate entities. However, times have



changed. And 1994 will be remembered as the year when the audio/video marriage became so well entrenched that a new term needed to be configured, something that

reflects that it is virtually impossible to experience one without

the other.  First came the stereo VCR and the laserdisc, then the Hi-Fi VCR, followed by an ever-widening range of CD-based optical disc formats. Surround

sound and its varied Dolby-generated permutations helped give



birth to the buzzword "home theater." And now the multimedia movement is adding credence to the audio/video claim with the business

clout of Silicon Valley.  No doubt, sooner or later someone

will invent a better term for what has transpired (*vaudio*, *auvdeo*?).

Nonetheless, the fact remains that audio/video '94 will be a year with tremendous innovation, offering consumers the next dimension in home entertainment.



194
A

audio
video



LOGIC FROM CARVER

Carver has introduced two A/V preamplifier/tuners: the CT-29v and CT-27v. For audiophiles who are concerned about video sound quality and who want to use separate power amplifiers for optimum audio performance, this product category combines the convenience features of an A/V receiver with the advanced performance of separate components.

The CT-29v and CT-27v include AM, FM and CATV tuning, video inputs for three sources, audio inputs for eight audio and video sources and S-video connectors.

State-of-the-art Digital Signal Processor circuitry provides Dolby Pro Logic, five other surround sound processor modes, and a time delay that is continuously adjustable from 0 to 90 ms or from 15 to 30 ms in the Dolby Pro Logic mode. There are outputs for left, center, right, two surround channels and a subwoofer. The subwoofer crossover has an

18 dB per octave low-pass filter.

Both units feature Vocal Zoom circuitry that enhances the dialog in the center channel and that allows you to vary the amount of emphasis added across the vocal frequency range in the center channel.

These preamplifier/tuners also have an automatic input balance feature that maintains precise level matching between the left and right channels for optimum surround sound and center channel decoding. The CT-29v has Auto Selection for surround vs. stereo modes. It will adjust modes to match surround sources such as laserdiscs, and will adjust to match stereo sources such as CDs. The other difference between the two models is a dual zone preamplifier on the CT-29v that allows, for example, a videodisc to be played in one room while a CD is played in another.

Prices for the CT-29v and CT-27v are \$1200 and \$850, respectively.

AZDEN WIRELESS SETS YOU FREE

The best-selling Azden VHF microphone system, WMS-PRO, gives camcorder owners the ability to clearly record the voice of their subjects up to 300 feet away, noise-free. The miniature receiver attaches to the camcorder with supplied shoe mount or velcro, and plugs into the camcorder's external microphone jack. The transmitter clips to the subject's belt, and you plug in either of the supplied mics, a lavalier or handheld. With two switchable frequencies, you can choose the clearest sound. The WMS-PRO comes with a convenient leatherette carrying pouch.



Azden WMS-PRO

SONY'S MINIDISC SYSTEM — PORTABLE WALKMAN OF THE 90'S

The MZ-E2 portable MiniDisc (MD) Walkman® player from Sony can be carried in a shirt pocket and is about the same size as a cassette case — yet the MD Walkman player delivers the outstanding digital sound quality and instant random access of the exciting new MiniDisc format.

And for the ultimate in compact convenience, the MD Walkman recorder (MZ-R2) allows you to create custom compilations of your favorite music on a 2.5-inch MiniDisc, while providing the same on-the-go listening enjoyment that the MZ-E2 provides.

Both MD Walkman stereos use new rechargeable lithium-ion batteries combined with optional AA alkaline batteries for

extended playback and recording. The MZ-E2 can play continuously for 7.5 hours with this battery combination and the MZ-R2 can play continuously for 6.5 hours and record for 4.5 hours in this fashion.

In addition to miniature size,

digital sound and energy efficiency, MD Walkman stereos are impervious to the shakes, rattles and rolls that on-the-go music listening is often associated with.

The MZ-E2 player and MZ-R2 recorder are \$549.95 and \$749.95, respectively.



Sony MZ-R2 and MZ-E2



audio
video

JVC'S DELUXE A/V VCR

How much more quality can JVC possibly pack into the VHS format that they invented? The new HR-S4900 reveals that innovation is still possible with the tried-and-true home video standard.

This state-of-the-art VCR offers the S-VHS format with over 400 lines of horizontal resolution, further enhancing the high resolution format with JVC's exclusive Super DA-4 double azimuth head system. The S-VHS picture remains clear even after multi-generation editing. In addition to an improved color integrated circuit, other advanced circuitry is also built in.

The Super Specification Mechanism is a full-time, full-loading center mechanism that incorporates JVC's Full Mode Tension Servo, which maximizes tape stability and reduces jitter. Quick Response and high-speed fast forward/rewind offer split-second accuracy.

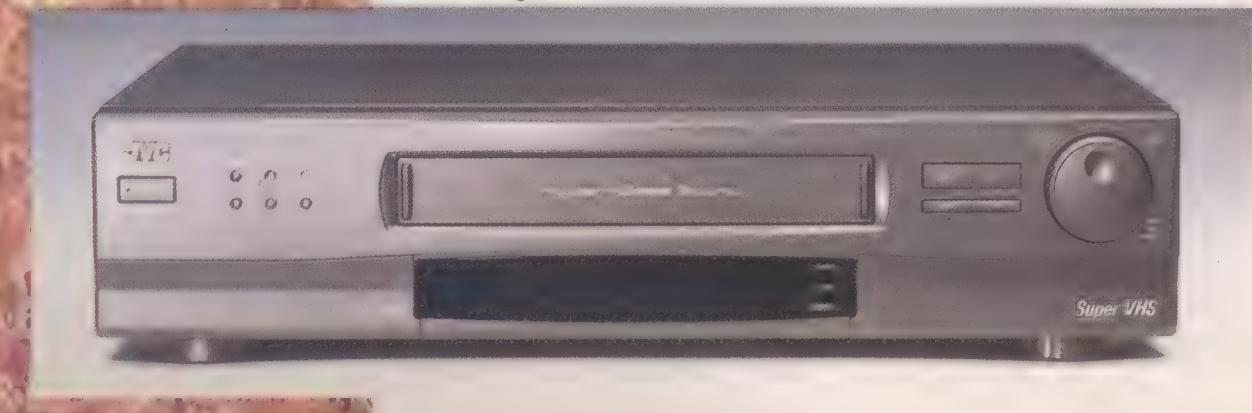
On the audio side, Hi-Fi stereo with Hyper-Bass sound is on-board. Intelligent Audio Switching Noise Reduction com-

plements a 90 dB dynamic range and the Hyper-Bass system enhances the low frequencies for powerful theater sound.

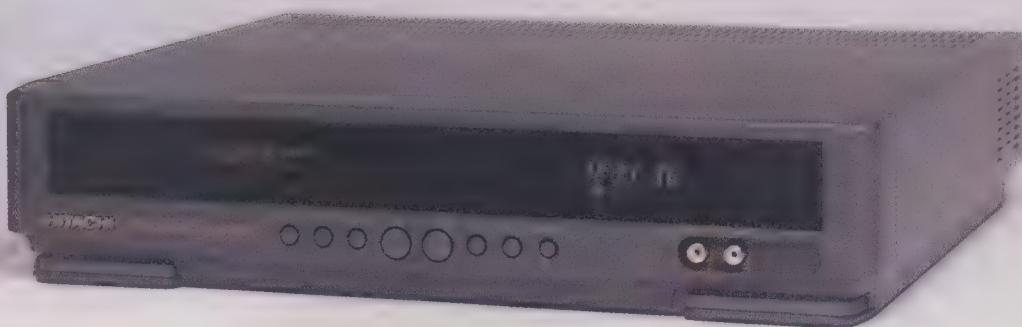
Besides its audio/video playback prowess, this deck is fully-equipped for today's discriminating video editor. Random Assemble (R.A.) editing automatically rearranges up to eight scenes in the order you want, and edits them to any JVC VCR with a Pause-In terminal. An optional R.A.E. remote is available, making it possible to perform advanced editing functions with 14 major brands of VCRs.

Other editing features include a flying erase head, insert edit, audio dubbing capability, Retake (to edit out unwanted segments while you record), a jog-shuttle wheel, and S-VHS/Remote Pause Input on the front panel and rear panel.

Conveniences include tri-lingual on-screen displays, 181-channel cable compatible tuner, 1-year/8-event timer, VCR Plus+ programming, A/V Compu Link, auto head cleaner, 10-speed slow motion, family message center and more. Retail price is \$899.95.



JVC HR-S4900



Hitachi VT-M281

TWO NEW VCR'S FROM HITACHI

Hitachi has introduced two new models to its VCR line that perform all the basic VCR tasks in easy-to-use, space-saving and attractive packages.

The VT-M181 (two-head) and VT-M281 (four-head) units make excellent choices for video recording and viewing with basic mono sound reproduction. For the technophobe, these models

feature Hitachi's Easy Guide on-screen display system, which takes you through all operational steps quickly and easily. And the on-screen menus are in three languages. Included with these VCRs is the convenient Video Brain Remote, which makes it simple to control the VCR, TV and cable box. Performance features include an auto head clean-

ing system, quick start mechanism, front A/V inputs and digital auto tracking.

Conveniences abound with GO-TO search for finding points on a videotape, real time counter, Movie Return switch, high-speed rewind and dual VCR control. The VT-M181 lists for \$269.95 and the VT-M281 lists for \$299.95.

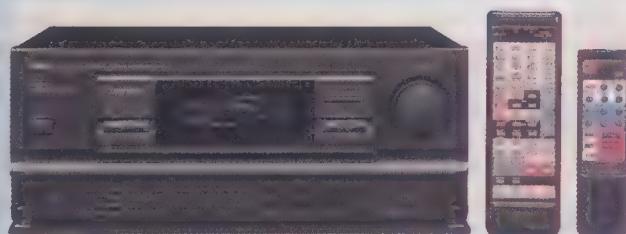
DENON A/V SURROUND RECEIVERS

Denon America's newest A/V receiver; the AVR-3000, sets a new standard for home theater sound quality and convenience.

The unit delivers advanced Digital Signal Processing (DSP), ultra-high performance Dolby Pro Logic circuitry, full-featured audio receiver performance, and high-power amplification.

What's more, the AVR-3000 has an advanced Pro Logic decoder microcircuit on-board, the SSM-2125, which provides a dynamic range of over 100 dB and ultra-low noise and distortion. The left, right and center channels employ powerful discrete-design amplifiers, which contain Denon's new Optical Class A circuitry, assuring that the amps are always correctly biased. The three front channels each deliver 110 watts of power into 8 ohms and the two discrete rear channel amplifiers deliver 35 watts a side.

The large array of features also include a Cinema Sound Equalizer that enhances dialog for clearer voice quality and an Audio Visual Sound Effect (AVSE) feature that adds to the dynamic impact of deep bass sounds to make video sound effects more dramatic. The AVR-3000 also boasts 19 inputs and 10 outputs, including S-video connectors. In addition, it is furnished with two remote controls; a programmable unit, and a Simple Commander for controlling common functions.



Denon AVR-3000



PROTON PERFECTION

Proton's NT-339 31-inch and NT-299 27-inch monitor/receivers are truly cutting edge.

These models feature stereo sound and dual-tuner picture-in-picture. Both feature square, flat screens that present a picture of uncompromised clarity, enhanced by Proton's proprietary circuitry that includes: Dynamic Black Level extension; Automatic Brightness and Contrast Limiting; and Color Transient Improvement. And Proton's advanced video effects package, also included on



Proton NT-339

both models, has slow motion and still image capabilities.

These units offer, two-way, bi-amplified speakers. A "Heavy Bass" subwoofer delivers all the impact of those low-frequency sounds. A selectable audio effects switch and an optional bass boost allow you to precisely tailor the sound to suit your environment and personal preferences.

The NT-339 sells for a suggested retail price of \$2400 and the NT-299 is priced at \$1700.

PANASONIC'S PRODIGAL

In a pair of new IQ Series Palmcorder models from Panasonic, Digital Electronic Image Stabilization (DEIS) and point-and-shoot technologies have been married to provide advanced video quality with minimal hassle. The PV-IQ504 and PV-IQ604 are Compact VHS (VHS-C) models that weigh far less than two pounds apiece, but are heavy with new features — and the PV-IQ604 even boasts a high-resolution color viewfinder.

Simply turn the power on, aim and start to shoot. Focusing, shutter speed, iris and white balance are all set optimally — even the built-in lens cover opens automatically. The DEIS uses digital circuitry to distinguish between subject movement and camcorder movement, and ensures that the picture remains steady even when the videographer isn't.

For even greater picture quality, these new camcorders, despite their diminutive size, incorporate VCR-size, 62mm head cylinders, which results in increased image stability and clarity.

And the Palmcorder design is extremely comfortable to operate with a special sculpted casing, the most comfortable grip yet, ergonomic operating controls and a swivel viewfinder with VCR controls underneath.

Other features include a zoom function, which can enlarge a subject up to 20 times, with an enhancement of 120 times, digital still, strobe effect, and widescreen mode for the new generation of 16:9 televisions.



Panasonic PV-IQ504

SOUND VALUES FROM INFINITY

Infinity is well known to lovers of fine audio products, but the company has recently expanded its objectives to encompass a whole other market — those who are merging audio and video for home theater. The reason for Infinity's emergence on the home theater scene is because, until now, home theater shoppers only had two choices: either very expensive systems made up of speakers that might not work well together or inexpensive package systems that aren't up to both music and audio-for-video reproduction.

Infinity's solution to this dilemma can be heard in their new line of speakers, named the Reference Standard Series. The Reference Standard Series brings high-performance loudspeakers into the home theater at an extremely competitive price.

How can they do this? Infinity has more than 25 years of experience in developing high-quality components at an excellent value. For example, some of the proprietary technologies employed in the nine speakers that comprise the Reference Standard Series include the Injection Molded Graphite (IMG) woofer, which blends acoustically damped polypropylene and ultra-strong graphite fibers to give stiffness and strength and solid dampening of sonic colorations; the woofer Dispersion Stabilizer,

which prevents the high-frequency "beaming" that is common in larger woofers; and the Polycell dome tweeter, which provides ferrofluid cooling of the voice coil — delivering higher power handling and improved linear coil motion.

Another aspect of the Reference Standard Series that sets them apart from their competitors is that

video speaker for center channel output. Infinity also understands that the home theater is just that — in the home. As a result, Infinity has kept that in mind with attractive enclosures that are available in West Hills Oak or Black Ash vinyl finishes with black cloth grilles. Plus, their compact design and small footprint



Infinity Reference Standard Series

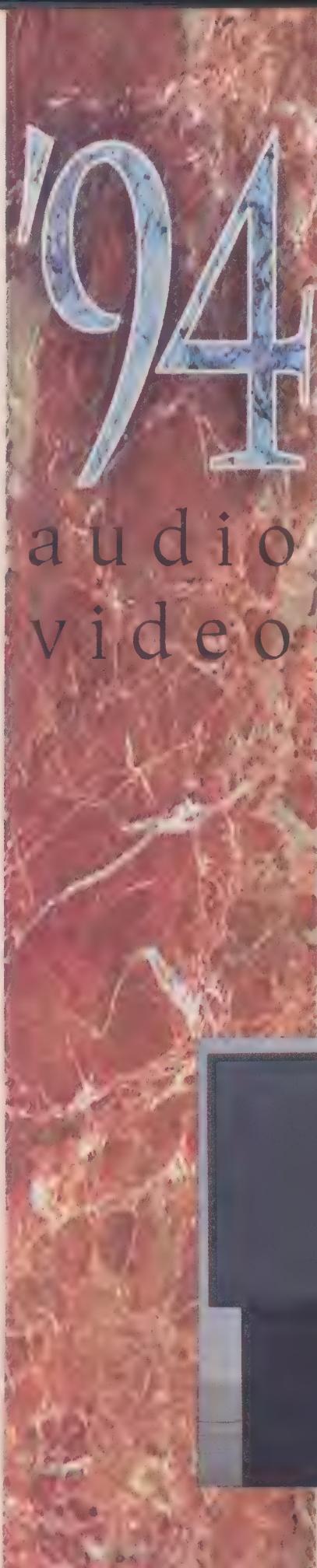
all of the speakers, including the subwoofers, are voice-matched. Voice-matching means that each of the speakers share a uniform tonal balance with the others. This adds realism to the home theater, making the voice sound consistent as it moves from speaker to speaker. Voice-matching also allows you to expand or upgrade the system without worrying about compromising sonic balance.

The Reference Standard Series includes all the speaker components necessary to make a powerful home theater, including a

make them unobtrusive in even the smallest of viewing rooms.

What about their affordability? Individual speakers in the Series range in price from approximately \$99 to \$359 each, and powered subwoofers from \$779 to \$999 each. With prices like these, an audio/video lover can have a quality six-speaker system — including a powered subwoofer — for less than a pair of fine stereo speakers.

There it is, high-performance and tremendous value — all from Infinity.



POWER TV FROM JVC

JVC Power Television features CRTs that produce pictures with such clarity that television programs appear with higher resolution, videogame graphics have a startling accuracy and Super-VHS tapes come to life with unmatched color and depth.

To achieve such a high degree of picture quality, Power Television picture tubes feature an improved electron gun that produces brighter pictures than ever before. These screens employ an Invar Shadow Mask that resists thermal distortion for the truest, purest colors. Dynamic Color Enhancement further enhances color and warmth. In addition, a notch filter eliminates horizontal dot interference for maximum sharpness, while a Velocity Modulation circuit gives graphics and characters hard, sharp edges that separate from

but don't blend into the background. S-video inputs for ultimate picture quality are also featured. And Power Television sports a special Theater status feature, which automatically makes seven picture adjustments for cinema-like pictures.

Great sound is an essential part of Power Television. The AV-31BX4 31-inch and AV-20TP4 20-inch, both have Acoustic Reflecting Speakers (ARS) that generate sound in the rear of the set and channel it forward through specially-designed sound chambers. The 27BX4 and the 31BX4 feature a wireless stereo headphone system, and it is available as an option on others.

In addition to providing the exciting widescreen (16:9) movie theater experience, the top-of-the-line 55-inch NV-55BX4 rear projection set has built-in Dolby Pro Logic decoding, two acoustic suspension main speakers and a center channel speaker with 10 watts of amplification to all five channels, plus jacks for two optional rear speakers. And Digital Signal Processing provides nine ambience modes, while Live Effex technology makes the dialog seem to come from each performer's position.

The Power Television line includes many convenience features and all are equipped with the Master Command remote.





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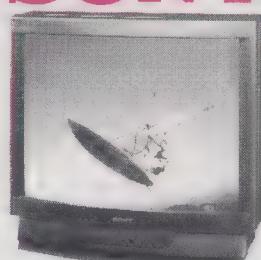
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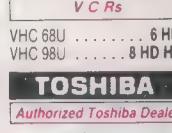
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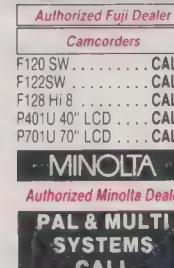
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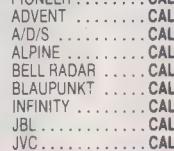


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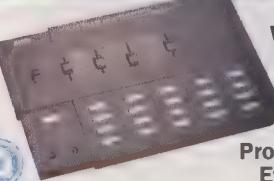
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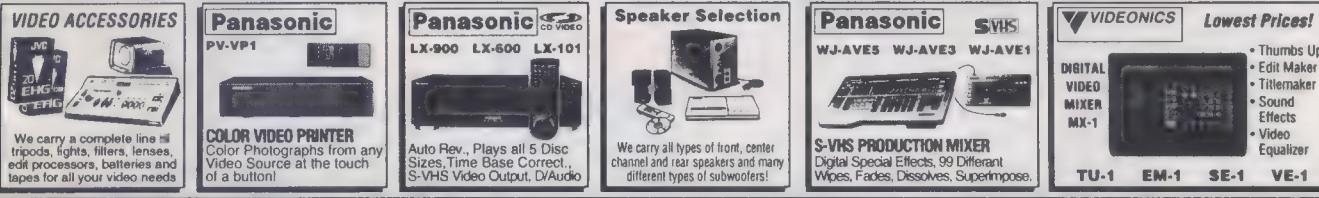
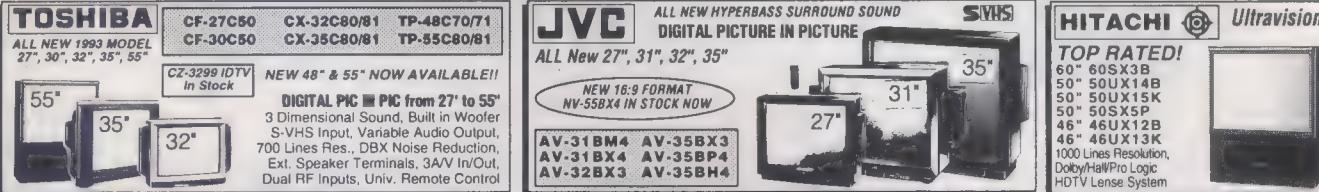
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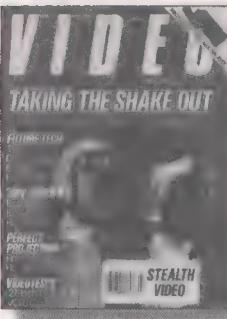
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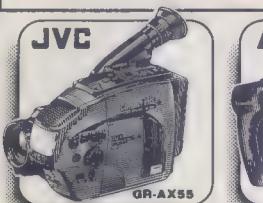
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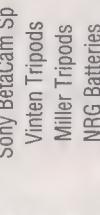
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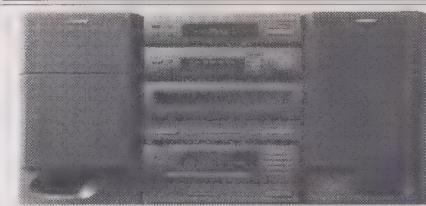
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- 470,000 PIXELS
- CHARACTER GENERATOR
- 2 LUX
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- CHARACTER GENERATOR

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- 10:1 ZOOM LENS
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- 1 LUX LOW

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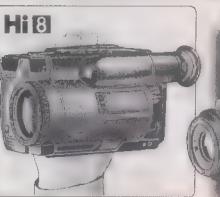
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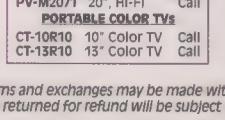
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VIDEO

Reader Service Card

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 Telephone Number (with Area Code) _____

1. What size is your primary viewing TV?

20"-25" A 27"-25" B 25"-27" C 35"+ D

2. Approximately how many hours per day do you watch TV?

0-2 E 3-5 F 6-10 G

3. How far in advance do you plan your TV viewing?

1 hour H 1 day I 1 week J No Planning K

4. Do you tape "series" programming (i.e. soap operas, mini-series)?

Yes L No M

5. Which sources do you use to plan TV viewing?

Daily Newspaper N Cable Guide O Weekly Newspaper Insert P

TV Guide Q Other R

6. How many programs do you tape per week?

1-5 S 5-7 T 7+ U

7. If programming your VCR was made easier would you record additional shows?

Yes V No W

8. Are you currently a subscriber to VIDEO? Yes X No Y

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61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
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166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180
181	182	183	184	185	186	187	188	189	190	191	192	193	194	195

VIDEO

Reader Service Card

Name _____
(please print)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number (with Area Code) _____

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continued from page 66

Edward II

1992. Tilda Swinton, Annie Lennox; dir. Derek Jarman. Marlowe's play about the king who would give all for a man is rejuvenated by Jarman's imagination into an original, entertaining and relevant film. Includes documentary about Jarman. Stereo. (NR) 90 min. LD \$49.95. Criterion.

The Jean Harlow Collection

1994 comp. Red Headed Woman (1932), Bombshell (1933), The Girl From Missouri (1934), and Reckless (1935). William Powell, Lec Tracy, Franchot Tone; dir. Victor Fleming (Bombshell & Reckless), Jack Conway (Woman & Missouri). Mixture of funniest and not-so-hot Harlow movies, but always Harlow is always hot. Mono. (NR) 346 min. LD \$99.98. MGM/UA.

Kalifornia

1993. Brad Pitt, Juliette Lewis; dir. Dominic Sena. Psycho-hitcher with Manson stare and simple girlfriend takes his ride for a ride and nobody gets to go home. Stereo. (R) 117 min. (NR) 118 min. VHS \$94.99. LD letterboxed \$34.95. PolyGram.

Legal Eagles

1986. Robert Redford, Debra Winger; Ivan Reitman. Assistant D.A. joins with flakey attorney to defend her performance artist client (Daryl Hannah — who must be seen to be believed) against murder-in-the-art-

world rap. Surround. (PG) 116 min. LD letterboxed \$34.98. MCA/Universal.

The Life of Emile Zola/ The Story of Louis Pasteur

1937 1936 B&W. Paul Muni; dir. William Dieterle. Emile Zola won three Oscars, but Paul Muni only earned a nomination for his dignified portrayal of the title character. He did win, however, for his performance as noble scientist Pasteur. Mono. (NR) 203 min. LD \$59.98. MGM/UA.

Osaka Elegy

1936. B&W. Isuzu Yamada; dir Kenji Mizoguchi. Switchboard operator is taken advantage of in this bitter comedy about the exploitation of women in Japanese society. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 75 min. LD \$49.95. Criterion.

Private Lives

1931. Norma Shearer, Robert Montgomery; dir. Sidney Franklin. Noel Coward's free spirits break the marriage rules as usual, this time by leaving new fiancés and returning to old spouses. Mono. (NR) 84 min. LD \$34.98. MGM/UA.

Revenge of the Creature/ The Creature Walks Among Us

1994 comp. B&W. John Agar, Lori Nelson, Jeff Morrow, Rex Reason; dir. Jack Arnold (Revenge), John Sherwood (Walks). The poor Creature gets double helping of exploitation by man: first as a marine park freak, then as the subject of mad scientist's experiments. Mono. (NR) 161 min. LD \$59.98. MCA/Universal.

Robinson Crusoe on Mars

1964. Paul Mantz, Adam West, Vic Lundin; dir. Byron Haskin. Robinson wants to go home (and finally he gets to go to home video), especially as his man Friday is an alien. Commentary by screenwriter Ib Melchior and star Paul Mantz, plus a guide to sci-fi films of the '50s and '60s. Mono. 110 min. LD letterboxed \$49.95. Criterion.

Sansho the Bailiff

1954. Kinuyo Tanaka, Kisho Hanayagi, Kyoko Kagawa; dir. Kenji Mizoguchi. In 11th-century Japan, a provincial governor is sent into exile and his family sold into slavery and prostitution. Later, son seeks vengeance and to reunite family. Mono, subtitled. (NR) 130 min. LD \$69.95. Criterion.

The Vikings

1958. Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis, Janet Leigh; nar. Orson Welles, dir. Richard Fleischer. Tough Kirk flexes and snarls in battles with his half-brother for the throne and the Welsh princess. Harsh. Mono. (NR) 117 min. LD letterboxed \$34.98. MGM/UA.

Ziegfeld Follies

1946. Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, William Powell, Gene Kelly; dir. Vincente Minnelli. Ziegfeld dreams up the ultimate show in heaven. Twenty stars in this restored tribute to the equally opulent Broadway producer. Mono. (NR) 115 min. CAV LD \$69.98. MGM/UA.

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AUDIO

continued from page 48

heavy the subwoofer will sound. "That's great!" you might say, "What's the point of having a subwoofer if it's not bass-heavy?" Well, if a sub is placed *too* close to a wall — or especially in a corner — the quantity of its bass output might be terrific, but the *quality* of the bass might be overly boomy and muddy. You don't want to spend the green on a high-quality sub and wind up with flabby, boomy bass unless the only laserdisc you like to watch is *Barry White: Up Close And Personal*, in which case call me up — I'll bring the Courvoisier, m'dear. With most rooms, you should be able to find a good position for your subwoofer that gives up the manly bass but keeps the overall balance of your system from becoming overly boomy.

2. Don't stack your other components atop your subwoofer. Except for things like power amplifiers and back issues of *Video Magazine*, a subwoofer is far too much of a vibrating surface on which to situate sensitive gear like laserdisc players, VCRs, video monitors and the like. And TVs just plain hate being even near the kind of magnetic field a subwoofer can throw — you'll notice this as a purplish picture distortion where the screen is nearest the sub.

If this happens, move the subwoofer far enough away from the screen so you don't see the discoloration. Placing the subwoofer behind the set usually does the job. Try it — you won't permanently harm the TV, and it's almost impossible to harm a good subwoofer except by playing Michael Bolton through it.

SUB SETUP

As I said, depending on the model

you buy, you have several options for hooking it up to the rest of your home theater. You can use the subwoofer output from the crossover in your processor or receiver, many of which have their own subwoofer level control. But things is, a powered subwoofer already has a crossover and a level control, so which should you use?

For 95 percent of all home theaters, I recommend sticking with the crossover in the receiver or processor, and using the sub's own level control to align it with the rest of the speakers in terms of relative volume. Set the receiver or processor's own level control to maximum. This passes on the job of controlling the sub's level to the sub itself. As with everything else, you may find your system is a five-percenter, and works better with the opposite approach, i.e., using the sub's crossover and the processor's level control. Either way, you want only one crossover in use, so set the one you're not using to off (sometimes labeled "defeat" or "full range").

You also want to make sure your subwoofer is hooked up with the correct polarity vis-a-vis your main speakers. You should always keep the polarity of your left, right, center and surround speakers identical by hooking them all up with the speaker cable's + wire connector to the + (red) connector on each speaker and the - wire connected to the - (black) connector. But the relative polarity of your subwoofer is totally arbitrary—depending on where you place the subwoofer, where you sit and a thousand other variables, you need to try hooking up your subwoofer with *both* polarities to hear which sounds better in your own home theater.

With some subwoofers, this is easily accomplished by switching the speaker wires. Many active subwoofers provide a polarity or phase switch to allow for

EZ'n'instnt polarity switching so you can quickly hear which setting sounds better. And if you can't hear any difference at all, don't sweat it. This ain't health care reform, you know?

Most powered subwoofers have an adjustable crossover that lets you set the upper frequency limit to which the sub will operate. Depending on your main speakers' own bass capability, I've found that setting the crossover point between 50 and 100 Hz usually gives the best blend between the subwoofer and the main speakers. The deeper your main speakers can go, the lower the crossover point you should consider.

Conversely, if you have small speakers (sometimes known as satellites) for your left, right and center, a crossover point of 100 Hz is usually the way to go. Some subwoofer crossovers have a few frequency settings to choose from, while others have a continuously variable knob that can sweep through the range. Either way, you should have no trouble hearing which crossover frequency sounds best with your speakers.

SET THE LEVELS

SUB-THREE DILEMMAS This may be the setup detail that causes the most people the most anxiety, but it really doesn't have to be such a big deal if you take some time to listen and get it right. The object of having a subwoofer is not to create an overall sound that's bass-heavy and thudding all the time. We're all familiar with that "FM deejay" sound where even the female deejays sound like they have the world's deepest and boomiest voice. This is exactly not the effect you want to shoot for in your home theater.

There are plenty of measurements you can make if you have access to fancy equipment in order to properly set the level of your subwoofer to match the rest of your speakers, but the one that always works the bestest and fastest for me doesn't require anything but your ears and the CBS *Nightly News* — I call it the Connie Chung test.

Tune in to our gal Connie, try not to wonder what she sees in Maury Povich, and listen to her voice as you slowly turn the level control on your sub up and down. You should hear her voice get extremely boomy and bass-heavy with the level cranked, and very thin and nasal with the level turned all the way down. Slowly turn the control up until her voice sounds just a trace too bass-heavy, then back off just a smidgen so her voice sounds natural.

I've used the Connie Chung test to set the levels for dozens of subwoofers in various home theater systems, and later measurements have always shown this method to be highly accurate. Remem-
continued on page 108



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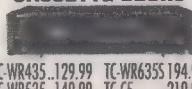
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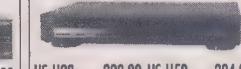
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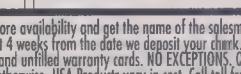
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continued from page 100

ber, you don't need to hear your subwoofer making sounds all the time to know it's working—most of the time, in fact, you shouldn't even be aware it's there. But when that arc-light scene comes on in *Apocalypse Now* and your whole room throbs, you'll be grinning from ear to ear and wonder how you ever lived without a subwoofer.

SOME SAFE BETS

With everyone and their mother getting into the home theater speaker biz, there's more bass boxes calling themselves subwoofers on the market than you can shake a stick at. Many are worthy, but as I said before, some are lousy. If you want a real subwoofer, stay out of the discount appliance huts. (This is a good recommendation for home theater speakers in general, not just subwoofers.)

Your local high-end audio dealer, usually listed under "Stereo/TV" in the phone book, is your best bet for speakers and subwoofers. Some butt-kickin' powered subs I've known and loved include the Muse Model 18 (\$2,750), the NHT SW2P (\$650) and the Mirage PS-12-180 (\$750). The mighty Muse was actually designed for high-end audio music systems, and remains the finest and most transparent subwoofer I've yet heard. Its integral 225-watt amp and dual 10-inch, slot-driven woofers extend the Muse's bass response down below even the audible range—you will definitely rattle every teacup in your house with this one.

In the more affordable realm, the NHT and Mirage subs both offer excellent performance, with the NHT going deeper and cleaner but the Mirage offering slightly more bass output owing to its larger driver (12-inch vs. the NHT's 10-inch woofer) and more powerful amplifier (180 watts vs. 80 watts for the NHT). I prefer the NHT's higher quality bass in the medium to medium-large rooms typical of most home theater environments, but a very large room will benefit from the Mirage's ability to play louder before distortion. Of course, you can always buy two of the NHTs.

That's all there is to it. A good subwoofer will reveal dramatic depths in your favorite film soundtracks you simply haven't experienced outside of a theater, and if you listen to music on your home theater as well as movies, you're in for a real treat once you inject the all-important bass line back into the music. To paraphrase what the guy on the Plochman's Mustard commercial sez: "You don't have to like T2 to add a butt-kickin' subwoofer to your home theater—but it could be hoity!" ■

TECH TIPS

Primitive discharge

A simple device made from a six-volt auto bulb and socket purchased from an automotive store can be used to fully drain a camcorder battery before recharging. Use a small piece of plastic as a base and attach the bulb and socket to it with small bolts and nuts. Place the device on the battery so the tips of the bolts touch the battery contacts, and hold it in place with a rubber band. When the bulb no longer glows, the battery is fully discharged.

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While transferring photos to video, instead of macro focusing and moving the photos in and out, use an economical 4x closeup lens filter normally sold for still cameras. Set the lens about eight to nine inches from the photos and adjust the focus ring and zoom lever. If you have an overlap function in your camcorder (like the Canon A1 has), you'll produce professional-looking dissolves.

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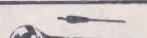
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Taming the urge to tape ...and tape...and tape

Last winter I got tired of tripping over the box of tapes overflowing next to my TV stand—the tapes I had made “to watch later.” I’m embarrassed to say how many there were. But if I had started then and there to watch them all, at 12 hours a day, seven days a week, it would have taken me more than three months—and I’d still be left with all the new stuff I’d have taped while I was watching the old ones.

Someone once said videos should be treated like books. We buy hundreds of books we never find time to read, and we don’t feel guilty about them. They look great just sitting on the shelf. We should feel the same way about all the videos we collect.

But I don’t, do you? I really wanted to see some of the shows I’d taped—I just didn’t know where on the tapes they were. Most of all, I wanted to clear up the tapes so I could use them to tape other stuff to watch later.

I spoke with eminent Toronto psychiatrist Dr. Joseph Wohlgelernter about this. He feels there are several reasons why people tape so much, but that some simply become obsessed—they don’t want to miss *anything*. He told me about a friend who has four VCRs, three of which he uses to tape things while he watches TV on the fourth. He wants it all. Dr. Wohlgelernter thinks people like this may have not been allowed to watch TV or had their TV hours severely restricted when they were kids. Now they’re making up for it (parents—take note).

But Dr. Wohlgelernter feels the most important reason people tape so much is because they feel they *should* collect certain shows, like educational programs. They never really plan to watch them all, but feel they should have them in their home.

If you really want to clear up your backlog of taped shows, it can be done,

no matter how many hundreds or thousands you may have. Here’s what worked for me:

- Get the right equipment. It’s impossible to go through thousands of hours of tapes unless you have a VCR with 28x scan and a real-time counter. It’s worth it to buy a machine just for this purpose.

- Start with your oldest tapes. If they’re old enough, you’ll have lost interest in almost everything on them. Chances are good you won’t remember taping half the stuff, and you’ll wonder why you taped the other half. When Pete Rose was news, I taped everything about him. Eleven months later, I couldn’t have cared less.

- If there’s something of interest, watch it. But watch as little as possible while you’re scanning. You can clear several tapes in an hour with a fast scan and the right attitude.

- Don’t be afraid to watch parts of shows—you won’t offend the director. You can cover a movie in less than 20 minutes. Watch the beginning, scan through to catch the sex scenes, then watch the end.

- If you find something you want to keep, note its place, then return to it after the rest of the tape has been gone through. Mark it “Set at Oprah to copy, all watched” (or whatever applies) and put it aside. When you’ve identified several shows worth keeping, copy them to other tapes.

- Get in the habit of popping in a tape during dull times on the tube. If there’s a half hour of no interest to you between *Roseanne* and *The John Larroquette Show*, use it to scan a couple of tapes.

To keep from getting badly backlogged again, try taping things at the slow speed so you can scan them faster, and limit the number of tapes you’re willing to accumulate before you watch them: 20 is a good number (that’s 120 hours of stuff).

On the other hand, if you’re happy with your situation and don’t want to change, don’t worry. There are a lot worse vices you could have. Come up with an inventory system that works, buy a dozen new bookcases and display your tapes proudly. You might even try for a world record. ■





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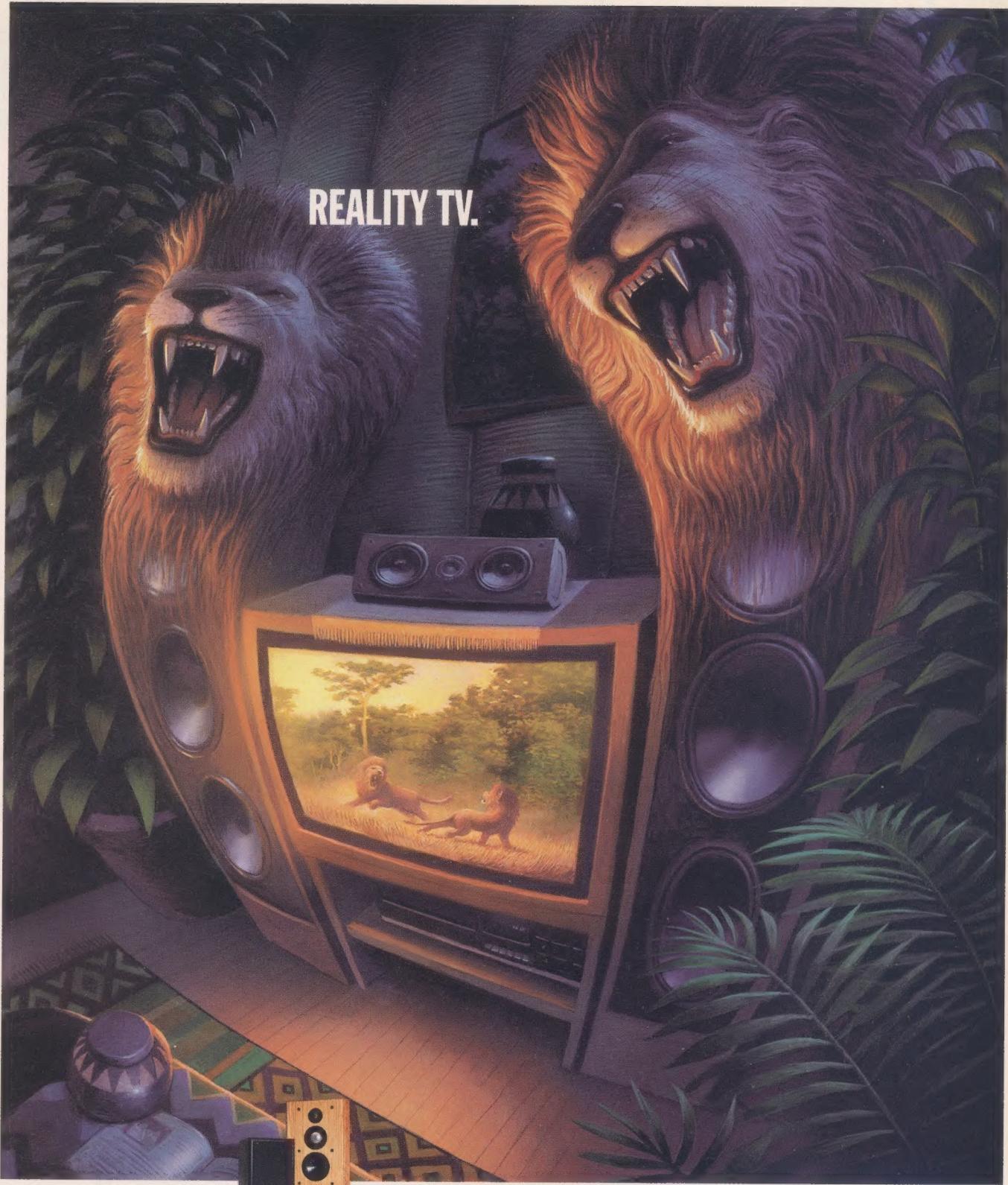


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